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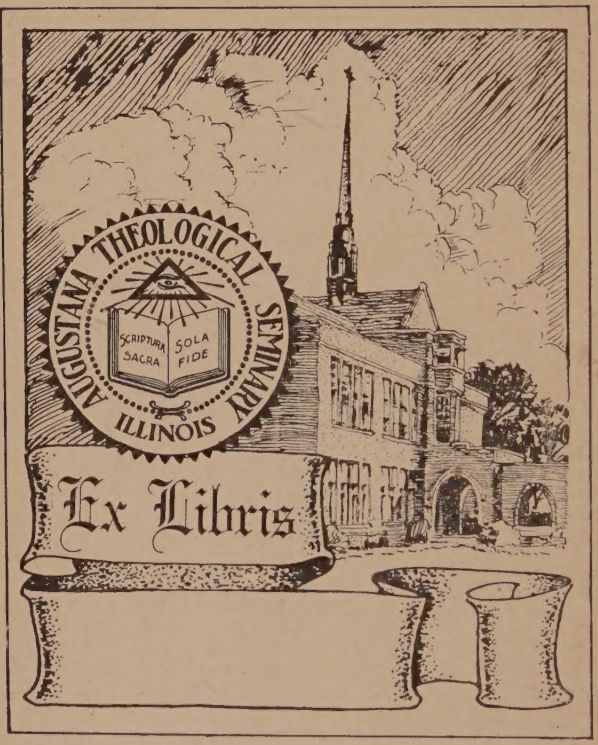
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IN
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THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

IN

PLOTINUS

BY

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PREFACE

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B. A. G. FULLER.

Paris, *June* 1912.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PAGE

Preliminary Considerations.—Division of the subject. Definition and discussion of metaphysical, physical, and moral evil. The apportionment of reward to merit . 1

Reasons why evil presents a distinct problem. Primitive yet sophisticated character of the question . . 14

Types of attempted solution of the problem of Evil. Four in number:

(1) Libertarianism. Evil the result of a misuse of free-will. A Fall from an original perfection. Inheritance of consequent sin and suffering.

(2) Ethical Monism. Transubstantiation of Evil by the Absolute. Reality better for the inclusion of Evil.

(3) Naturalism. Evil as well as good purely relative to the human point of view. Reality unmoral and indifferent.

(4) Pluralism (Dualism). Evil as absolutely real as good. Existence in the universe of obstacles and limitations to the prevalence of the divine will, and the establishment of the Good . . . 18

Review of the development of the problem of Evil in the history of Greek philosophy. The Pre-Socratic philosophers and contemporary "lay thought." Plato and Aristotle. The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics. The Neo-Pythagoreans and Neo-Platonists . . 25

CHAPTER I

SOME GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE PLOTINIAN SYSTEM

PAGE

Statement of the Problem of Evil. Consideration of pertinent features of the Plotinian system. Plotinus's inheritance from Plato 43

The Plotinian Trinity:

(*a*) The Soul. Suggested by the World-Soul in the *Timaeus*. Her nature and functions. The principle of sensation and vitality. Reasons for not regarding her as the First Principle. (1) Her multiple character and omnipresence. (2) The incomplete character of her functions of sensation and synthetic reasoning 46

(*b*) The Mind. Synoptic Reason, intuitive of Truth. A combination of the world of Platonic Ideas and the Aristotelian God 51

(*c*) The One. Its incomprehensible and ineffable character. Pure unity transcending all multiplicity and variety, even the duality of subject and object in thought. Inability of our experience to furnish any predicate or category descriptive of it. Neither quantity, nor quality, nor being, nor good, nor consciousness, nor mind, nor even one in the ordinary use of the term; but above and beyond them all. Describable in negative terms only. Union with it attained only in a super-rational and super-conscious state of ecstasy . 54

CHAPTER II

METAPHYSICAL EVIL

Metaphysical Evil and dualism a corollary of mysticism. Philo an example 63

Inability of Plotinus to admit either metaphysical Evil or dualism. The intention of his system monistic. Attempted solution of the difficulty by the doctrine of emanation. Creation regarded as a spontaneous over-

PAGE

flow of the divine nature realizing every possibility of being and perfection 66

Initial difficulties involved in the theory of emanation :

(*a*) Of distinguishing the emanation from its source.

(*b*) Of accounting for variety and multiplicity within the emanation.

Plotinus's treatment of these difficulties. Distinction of two acts or operations, one of conserving, the other of communicating the essence. Necessity that the emanation should be different from its source. Otherwise undistinguishable from its source. The emanation from the One, necessarily not-one, that is, Many . . 71

Deduction of Mind from the One. Backward look of the emanation towards its source. Recognition of itself as separate from its source. Constitution of itself as Truth and Reason. Identity of Thought and Being in an Intellect the object of its own thought. Deduction of the Categories and Ideas 73

Derivation of the Soul from Mind. Soul an emanation from Mind, the principle of life and sensation, creating, sustaining, and animating all Nature . . . 78

Derivation of the Universe from Soul. Impossible that the power of emanation should stop with Soul. Further possibilities of being and perfection. The corporeal world an emanation or "overflow" from the Soul . 82

The place of Evil in such a system. Implication of metaphysical Evil. The emanation of Mind from the One properly a fall. Plotinus's rejection of the implication. His denial of metaphysical Evil. Exclusion of Evil from the realms of Mind and Soul . . . 83

Consideration of the difficulties involved in the Plotinian rejection of metaphysical Evil. Discussion of the term "perfection." Distinction of mechanical or natural, from moral perfection. Analysis of the expression "perfect after its kind." Impossibility of maintaining a theory of degrees of perfection. Perfection superlative . 89

Incidental bearing of the discussion on Theology. No distinctions of better and worse in a perfect state. In Paradise no difference in point of perfection and happiness between God and the redeemed spirits. Heaven polytheistic 95

Failure to distinguish between natural and moral perfection in the systems of Plato and Aristotle . . 98

PAGE

Confusion consequent upon Plotinus's failure to distinguish between natural and moral perfection. The contradiction involved in considering the perfection of Soul as less perfect than that of Mind and the perfection of Mind as less perfect than that of the One. The impropriety of regarding Universe, Soul, and Mind as at the same time perfect and not self-sufficient. General weakness and incompleteness of the Plotinian discussion of metaphysical Evil 99

Plotinus's defence of the perfection of the Universe against the pessimism of the Gnostics. Outline of the Valentinian doctrine. Its resemblance to the system of Plotinus. The superior logic of its treatment of metaphysical Evil 103

The Plotinian assertion of the goodness of the world. Equality of perfection not to be expected of all things. Evil in the part not destructive of the perfection of the whole. The folly of demanding of the sensible, the perfection of the intelligible world. The World-Soul not obstructed and corrupted by the body of the Universe as the individual soul by the individual body. The perfection after its kind of each particular genus and species in the Universe 107

The absurdities of the pretensions of the Gnostics exposed by Plotinus. Their impiety in arrogating to themselves a spiritual nature and a special favour of Providence denied by them to the heavenly bodies and the earth. The foolishness of their doctrine of the "Paradigm." The anarchistic results to Ethics of their refusal to see any differences between the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the evil, in the sensible world 117

Discussion of the Plotinian refutation of the Gnostics. 125

CHAPTER III

PHYSICAL AND MORAL EVIL

Internal imperfection of the Universe. Its failure to realize even its proper mundane perfection. The internal conflict and reciprocal destruction of its parts. The presence of suffering, and, in humanity, of sin . . 130

PAGE

Division of the subject. Physical evil, moral evil, and the relation between the two. Physical evil. The Plotinian point of view broader than the Christian. The inclusion of animal suffering in the problem. Four symptoms of physical evil for Plotinus. (*a*) The mutability of all things. (*b*) The failure of things to realize their proper types and perfections. (*c*) The conflict between types as such. (*d*) The conflict between particulars 133

The Plotinian treatment of these symptoms :

(*a*) *The Mutability of all things.* Generation and corruption to be regarded as part of the nature, and hence of the perfection of a sensible, as distinguished from an intelligible world. Neither the formal structure of the Universe as a whole, nor any particular form affected by it.

(*b*) *The failure of the particular to realize its proper entelechy.* Application to particulars of the principle of varieties of perfection. Each individual, like each Form, or like the Universe, Soul and Mind, possessed of its individual entelechy and justified in its individual existence. Realization of the type by the particular equivalent, on the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, to the destruction of the individual as such . . 137

Criticism of the Plotinian argument. The perfection of the individual made dependent on the failure of the particular to realize the perfection of its type. An example of the contradiction involved in regarding perfection as graded 142

Possible avoidance of the difficulty by recourse to the doctrine of Ideas of individuals. This doctrine, though held by Plotinus, not invoked by him in this connection . 146

Similarity of Plotinus's method of dealing with the difficulty to modern systems of ethical monism. Comparison of his assertion that the particular, though justified in not realizing, must still strive to realize the universal, with the Neo-Hegelian theory that the Universe is perfect for the very reason that we feel and act as if it were imperfect. Both theories saved from absurdity only by a concealed naturalism 147

(*c*) *The conflict of types.* An obscure and difficult point. The Plotinian appeal to logical subsumption and

PAGE

organization irrelevant. Logical consistency of a world not sufficient for its perfection. The scientific not the only human interest. Evil not banished by being understood and explained . 149

(*d*) *The conflict of particulars.* The Plotinian justification of the internecine conflict between the different parts of the Universe. The particular by nature perishable. The death of one thing, the life of another. Form and Matter eternal. The transitoriness of particulars likened to the same actor's change of mask and rôle. Better a mortal and mutable world than no sensible world at all . 154

The Plotinian treatment of physical evil in its immediate bearing upon human life. Similarity to the Stoic Theodicy. Denial that Evil exists for the wise and virtuous. Invocation of the dramatic analogy. The vicissitudes of human life to be regarded as indifferent to essential human excellences 157

Conflict of Mysticism and Stoicism in the Plotinian conception of the sage. Comparison of the Mystic and the Stoic attitudes towards life. Their agreement in disparaging external goods and ills—The difference in the quality of their equanimity. Absolute optimism *v.* absolute pessimism. The Plotinian sage possessed of both attitudes 158

Discussion of the danger involved in both attitudes—Their latent antinomianism. The identity of absolute optimism and pessimism. Pessimism, or naturalism, preferable ethically to absolute optimism. Absolute optimism destructive of all effort to improve the world. A Reality already perfect incapable of improvement. Sin and imperfection apparent only and unimportant in such a system. Moral action always action as if the absolute of the ethical monists, or an omnipotent Deity did not exist. Ethical monism only saved from moral anarchy by a latent naturalism. Statement of the difficulties in terms of the dramatic analogy. Plotinus's recognition of the dangers of this position. Postponement of the consideration of his argument . . . 161

Necessity of the existence of physical evil for the sinner. No contradiction involved in asserting its existence for the sinner, while denying its existence for the virtuous and wise. A Universe in which sin is punished better

PAGE

from a moral point of view than one in which it is not. The Plotinian development of the punitive relation between physical and moral evil. Immortality, transmigration of souls. Karma, or the law of moral causality. Intermediate states 167

Plotinus's theory of an economy in vice on the part of the Universe. The criminal pressed into the service of the divine justice. The violence suffered by the victims of crime, a just punishment for misdeeds in former existences. The criminality of the perpetrator none the less a fact. Punishment remedial not vindictive. "Karma" a proof of the providential government of the world 171

The difficulty of reconciling the doctrines of transmigration and "Karma" with the theory of Ideas of individuals. The Idea, and therefore the essence, of the individual immutable and incapable of variation in moral value. The Plotinian treatment of the difficulty. Introduction of the principle of Matter. Approximation to the Kantian distinction between the "empirical" and "intelligible" characters in the individual. Variations in moral values involved in transmigration and the operation of Karma, attributable to the "empirical" character only. Discussion 174

Continuation of Plotinus's treatment of the problem of reward and merit. His failure to make sufficient use of the notions of Karma and transmigration. His reversion to the argument of grades of perfection. Perfect apportionment of reward to merit not to be demanded of a sensible world. His attack on the theory and practice of non-resistance to evil. Possible reference to the Christians 179

Criticism of the Plotinian discussion. Inadequacy of the judicial analogy. (*a*) The inexplicable tardiness of the divine justice. (*b*) The divine justice as commonly understood a sign of imperfection not of perfection in the Universe. Punishment of sinners a mere "policing" of the Universe necessitated by the existence of Evil 184

Moral Evil. The problem of sin. Difficulty of accounting for it in the Plotinian system. Attempt to shift responsibility for moral evil from God to man. Freewill. The implicit determinism of the Plotinian philosophy.

PAGE

Emanation governed by necessity. Rigid determination within the realm of Mind, Soul, and the physical Universe. The difficulty of reconciling moral responsibility with such a theory 186

Plotinus's treatment of the difficulty. His attempt to detach notions of responsibility and freedom from the idea of the indifference of the will. His review and criticism of the atomistic, hylozoistic, astrologistic, Heracleitean, and Stoic theories of causation . . . 194

His identification of freedom with self-determination. The Soul a principle, active not passive, modifying as well as modified by outer stimuli. Comparison of the Plotinian with the Kantian view of freedom . . 194

The dangers, involved in such a theory, of freeing Providence from responsibility for good as well as for evil. Plotinus's method of dealing with the problem. His distinction between action in accordance with Providence, and by Providence. The "will of God" not the source of human volition, but a standard of good, without which volition has no moral significance 199

Another difficulty. The problem of reconciling responsibility with the freedom of self-determination. The will, when self-determined (free), incapable of willing other than the good; when determined by outer influences, *e.g.* the solicitations of sense, not free, and therefore not responsible. Further comparisons of Plotinus with Kant. The inadequacy of his treatment of the question. His irrelevant appeal to the theory of grades of perfection 201

Criticism of the Plotinian discussion of the problem of freedom and determinism. A possible method of dealing with the difficulty. The process of emanation neither free nor determined. The antinomy of freedom and necessity not a dilemma. The terms only significant and opposed in an imperfect world, where the expression of the will is hampered by limitations . . . 204

Resumption of the Plotinian argument regarding moral Evil. Attempts to explain Evil as positively contributive to the perfection of the Universe:

(*a*) Reapplication of the theory of degrees of perfection. Human excellence an inferior kind of excellence. Complete moral virtue not to be expected of man.

PAGE

(*b*) Parts, imperfect in themselves, capable in combination of forming a perfect whole.
(*c*) Evil productive of good.
(*d*) Appeal to the aesthetic analogy. Comparison of the opposition of good and evil to that of hero and villain in the play, or of notes in a musical instrument. Explicit declaration of the interdependence of contraries 206

Dualistic qualifications of the foregoing arguments by Plotinus. (*a*) Sin not a *sine qua non* of virtue, but due to a residuum of irrationality which the divine order is unable to subdue. (*b*) Evil necessary, not as a contrast to set off the good, but as a lack or diminution of good. (*c*) Grades of perfection identified for the moment with grades of imperfection. (*d*) The material for the world-drama found, not created by, the divine playwright 213

The Plotinian discussion of the nature of the opposition between good and evil. Transition to dualism and a theory of Matter. Opposites not necessary to one another's existence. Evil not necessary to good, Not-being not necessary to Being. Evil necessary to good in the sense that a last term in a series is necessary to a first. Evil the last term in the series of emanations from the Good. This "last" also Matter 219

Discussion of dualism. Defence of moral dualism. The question of the omnipotence of God. Analysis of the religious demand that God shall be conceived as almighty 222

CHAPTER IV

MATTER AS THE PRINCIPLE OF EVIL

Evil excluded by Plotinus from the sphere of real existence and identified with Not-being. The problem of the existence of Not-being in Plato and Aristotle. Not-being for Plotinus relative and equivalent to the not-good. Evil for Plotinus incidental to a progressive degeneration from higher to lower levels of being. Distinction

PAGE

between primary and secondary, substantival and adjectival evil. Vice not substantival evil, but accidental and adjectival in the soul. The essence of the soul pure. Inconsistency of the Plotinian theory of Evil as a degeneration of the Good with the doctrine of degrees of perfection. Final definition by Plotinus of primary and secondary evil 225

Evil not determination of Matter by Form, but a blurring of Form by Matter. Matter the indefinable substratum of all qualities and modifications 234

Difficulties connected with regarding Matter as an indefinable substratum:

(*a*) Epistemological difficulty of "knowing" the indefinable. Plotinus's reply. Adjectival or secondary evil known through the agency of, and by contrast with, the Form partially obscured. Substantival evil known by a spurious knowledge, the Platonic *νόθος λογισμός* 235

(*b*) The ethical difficulty of ascribing an evil character, to that which is without quality or determination. The difficulty in Aristotle. Implicit attribution by him to Matter of a positive recalcitrancy, as well as a positive inclination, to the Good. Self-contradictions of the doctrine. Plutarch's criticism. Introduction of a positive principle of evil antagonistic to God. Matter neutral. The doctrine of Numenius. Philo's theory of Matter. The Plotinian solution of the difficulty. Identification of the positively Evil principle demanded by Plutarch with precisely the absolute lack of form, determination, and quality of the Aristotelian *πρώτη ὕλη*. All qualification good. Opposition of good and evil not an opposition of qualities or characters, but of an absolute lack of form and character to determination as such . . . 240

Criticism of the Plotinian argument. The implicit attribution of positive existence to Not-being. Its vacillation between the conceptions of Not-being as relative and as absolute. Similar vacillation between conceptions of the plurality of Ideas and particulars as a variety of types of perfection, and as grades of imperfection. Impossibility of regarding Not-being as the cause of Evil . 257

Resumption of the Plotinian discussion. Privation or

PAGE

στέρησις—absence of essence. Vice not a privation of good in the soul. Privation again not a quality. The relation of Privation to Matter. Agreement of Privation and Matter in point of indeterminateness. The relation of Matter to indeterminateness. Indeterminateness not a property, but the essence of Matter. Matter not identical with all "otherness" or "difference," but only with difference from Being as such. Matter, then, or Not-being identical simply with privation of Being. Privation not destroyed by the advent of determination. Matter not in itself rendered good by its union with the Good 259

Further questions regarding the nature of moral evil. Vice not the same as the entrance of the Soul into Matter, body, and generation. Matter, then, the cause of evil in the soul. Plotinus's rejection of the Aristotelian theory of the particular—the τόδε τι—composed of Form and Matter. Abolition of all but a nominal distinction between moral and physical evil 270

Matter as a physical substratum. Plotinus's adoption of the Aristotelian Argument. Form alone insufficient to account for Change. His criticism of the hylozoistic and atomistic theories of Matter. More detailed criticism of Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Anaximander, and Leucippus. Conclusion that Matter in itself is without qualities, primary or secondary 274

Intelligible Matter. Plotinus's distinction between intelligible and sensible Matter. Intelligible Matter the common quality and basis in the Ideas and Forms, *i.e.* Being. Matter implied or created by the Idea of Difference as the medium in which the differentiation of the Forms takes place. The indefiniteness of intelligible Matter an image of the infinity of the One; the indeterminateness of sensible Matter the image of the indefiniteness of intelligible Matter 277

Review of the Plotinian theory of Matter. Plotinus's combination of the Platonic and Aristotelian Theories. Matter a law or condition rather than a stuff. Plotinus's modifications of the Platonic and Aristotelian Teaching. His tendency to regard Matter as absolute Not-being. Individuation of Forms and Souls due to the Idea of Difference 282

Criticism of the Plotinian Theory. Not a corrrection

PAGE

but an exposure of the self-contradictions latent in the Platonic and Aristotelian views. Opposed tendencies towards naturalism and mysticism. Failure of both systems to regard the plurality of Forms and Ideas as due to the division and diminution by an evil principle of a single transcendent Good. Their silence regarding the cause of the plurality of Ideas and Forms . . 284

The Plotinian confusion of the functions of Matter and those of the Idea of Difference :

(*a*) *Usurpation of functions of Matter by the Idea of Difference.* The difference of the particular from its Form or Idea already logically implied in the differentiation of particulars from one another. Impossibility of assuming different principles for the individuation of human and of non-human particulars. Idea of Difference responsible for all individuation or for none. A dilemma between naturalism and mysticism.

(*b*) *Usurpation of the functions of the Idea of difference by Matter.* Matter responsible for difference of all particulars from their perfections, and hence for the difference of all lower kinds of perfection from the supreme perfection of the One . . 288

The Plotinian transition from dualism to monism . 298

CHAPTER V

THE THEORY OF EMANATION

The Plotinian attempt to deduce Matter from the One. Review of the theory of emanation. The procession of Mind from the One, and of Soul from Mind. Necessity of further emanation realizing every possibility of Being, and displaying the powers of creation and illumination in the Soul. Consequent necessity of a physical Universe. Matter the limit of indeterminateness ; the last term in a series of which the One is the first 299

Two aspects of the Plotinian theory of emanation :

(*a*) *An endeavour to show that a series of emanations as such logically implies imperfection.* Emanation

PAGE

equivalent to departure and separation, and hence to differentiation of the generated from the generator. But differentiation from perfection implicative of imperfection.

(*b*) *An attempt to derive existence and nature of Matter from the One.* Matter not an absolute and independent principle. Caused by the exhaustion of the powers of the Soul. Matter dependent upon and relative to Being, as the negation of Being 305

Difficulties involved in the Plotinian theory. Implication of metaphysical evil and of the imperfection of Mind and Soul. Self-contradiction of the Plotinian rejection of the implication. Confusion of degrees of imperfection with kinds of perfection. Consequent denial that emanation involves deterioration 308

Difficulties connected with the problem of moral evil. No "fall" involved in the procession of Mind from the One, of Soul from Mind, or of the Universe from the World-Soul. Question as to why the emanation of the particular body from the individual Soul should involve moral evil. Confused character of Plotinus's reply:

(*a*) On the one hand possession or creation of a particular body regarded as not in itself a "fall" but rather as an unfolding of the nature and perfection of the individual Soul. Moral evil due to a special relation to the body.

(*b*) On the other hand separation of the individual Soul from the World-Soul, and her mere attachment to any particular body regarded as the origin of moral evil.

In either case the "fall" of the soul due to a diversion of her interest from the contemplation of truth to the solicitations of sense 310

The problem whether this diversion of the interest of the soul from the universal to the particular be necessitated by the process of emanation or be an act of free-will. Plotinus's attempt to deny the dilemma of free-will and necessity. The process of emanation neither free nor determined, or both free and determined, *i.e.* actuated by an inner necessity of the nature, equivalent to a free expression of the "will," of the One, Mind, and Soul.

PAGE

Application of this doctrine to the solution of the problem of moral evil. The diversion of the attention of the soul from contemplation to sensation both necessary and free. Explanatory of moral evil *qua* necessary, not responsible for moral evil *qua* free. The process of emanation in general explanatory of evil without being to blame for it 319

Fallacy of the Plotinian argument. Its equivocation. Its description of the "fall" of the soul as both free and determined really fatal to the purpose of the Plotinian theodicy. A dilemma:

(*a*) *Qua* determined, the diversion of attention of the soul from the universal to the particular the fault not of the soul but of the process of emanation. Consequent dualism, or else attribution of responsibility for evil to God.

(*b*) *Qua* free, the diversion of the attention of the soul from the universal to the particular a contradiction in terms. In so far and so long as it is free, the attention of the soul always directed towards the universal and the Good. The unfree will only capable of sin. Evil then either inexplicable, or explained in ways contrary to the intention of Plotinus. Further confusion by Plotinus of emanation regarded both as an evolution of different sorts of perfection, and as a degradation of a sole and single kind of perfection.

General criticism of the theory of emanation. Its reliance upon metaphors and analogies. Latent dualistic implications of these analogies. In every case the diminution of the emanation due to no logical necessity inherent in the source or process, but to the agency of an external principle. Without such a principle, the inferiority of the generated to the generator, *e.g.* of the Universe to the One, inexplicable. Perfection unimpeded incapable of producing anything less perfect than itself. General reassertion of ethical dualism. Impossibility of finding the origin of Evil in the Good. Necessity of positing a principle other than the Good to account for the presence of Evil in the universe 323

Résumé of the book. Conclusion . . . 329

INTRODUCTION

Attempts to give a definition of Evil are proved by history to have little bearing upon the problem which Evil presents. Philosophers have found it sufficient to take the fact that there is Evil at its face value, and that value in all the looseness of its extension. They have not worried over our varying uses of the word, and the apparent lack of external connection between the facts to which it is applied. They have not found it necessary for their purpose either to distinguish between sin, imperfection, suffering, disappointment, failure, or to exhibit the bond of union between them. Crime and colic seem irrelevant regarded as facts, yet both instantaneously agree in being evil, and may be treated without further inquiry as presenting aspects of the same problem. In short, the problem of Evil has little or no interest in the classification of phenomena and the analysis of their common value. Its interest lies rather in estimating the metaphysical position and significance of such a value in reality, and pays little heed to the apparent heterogeneity of the facts that

possess it. Definitions of a sort we shall find, to be sure, in plenty, but their intention is not so much to describe the evil phenomena as to explain them.

We may then, I think, decline with justice to be drawn into any discussion of what the peculiar quality of an evil fact is. But at the same time it will be convenient for the better handling of the subject to distinguish roughly between certain of the more salient differences that separate one class of evil phenomena from another. To this end I have adopted the well-known partition of Evil into three kinds—metaphysical, physical, and moral, a division classic since the time of Leibnitz. A fourth division might also be added to include the question of the discrepancy between reward and merit, which always proves so fundamental and insistent an aspect of our problem. I may, however, have departed somewhat from Leibnitz's understanding of the terms in my use of them. The expression "metaphysical evil" I have employed to express that *a priori* dissatisfaction with the mere fact of the finite, quite apart from any *a posteriori* valuation of it, which is characteristic of so much mystic thought. The world from this point of view is evil for no other reason than that it is a world; the individual imperfect because he is himself and not another, one fact among many and not the only fact. Perfection can be attained only by transcending all finite and particular experience, both the manifold of sense and the manifold of discursive thought, and in

one's self wholly becoming the one whole ineffable Reality. So-called finite goods and perfections are illusions, preferable only to finite evils because by pursuit of them one sooner escapes from them. The mere existence of the universe, then, is sufficient to damn it. The world, inasmuch as it exists, is already evil, and of this metaphysical evil physical and moral evil are natural symptoms.

"Physical evil" I have used to express the fact that there is suffering in the world. The universe does not all pull together. One part in its behaviour conflicts with another. There is constant struggle between the different forms of existence, involving mutilation and destruction of one part by another. In this fact of conflict and destruction there is, of course, no intrinsic evil. Each occurrence in the flux has its sufficient reason, is perfectly natural, and therefore "naturally" perfect. But in the case of living and sentient beings, the cosmic friction stunts organic development and inflicts pain. Thus, to set aside for the moment the other animals, man finds his environment recalcitrant to his purpose, his will thwarted by a thousand stubborn physical facts. His existence and happiness are in continual jeopardy. He is subject to disease and calamity and untimely death; in a word, to ill-treatment at the hands of Nature, against which his shrewdest measures, defensive and offensive, are as yet unable to protect him.

As physical evil means the conflict of human

interest with natural processes, so the term "moral evil" has been used to express the conflict of one human interest with another. It will be noted at once that I have thus covered by the term much more than the mere phenomenon of sin, expressing by it, indeed, the whole complex human situation of which sin is but a symptom. For sin, I take it, means, broadly defined, the performance of an act which we know at the time to be wrong. It is the failure to conform to an ideal to which we know we ought to conform. I have no intention here of entering upon a discussion of what we mean by "wrong" or by "ought," nor yet to touch upon the idea of free will and moral responsibility suggested by the term "sin." I would merely point out that these ideas, the distinctions between "right" and "wrong" and "ought" and "is," and the consciousness of a choice between good and evil, all point to a condition of human life in which the real root of sin and the foundation of all moral evil are to be found.

This condition is primarily exemplified in the case of any single human will detached for purpose of analysis from its social relation. Supposing that there were only one man in the world, he would still find himself confronted with a situation which might almost be described as ethical. He would find himself so constituted that it would be impossible for him to develop all his interests and gratify all his desires. His will would be to some extent self-

contradictory and in need of systematization. He would have to choose among a variety of possible purposes and satisfactions. To attain one good he would be obliged to renounce another. He would be what he is, in a word, only by the sacrifice of the many other rich and living selves he might have been.

If now we restore him to his social environment, the situation becomes more complex and more unsatisfactory. Not only is his will not at one with itself, but it also conflicts to some degree with the wills of his fellows. His self-expression interferes with that of his neighbour. Good clashes with good, ideal with ideal. And the outer conformity of his purpose with the general social purpose involves sacrifice and renunciation of possible goods to a far greater extent than does its inner consistency with itself.

This, then, is the moral problem—first, to proportion the interests of any one individual in order that they may group themselves in self-consistent unity, and secondly, so to proportion them that this unity may express a purpose accordant with the conceived ideal harmony of all wills. It is in the deliberate shirking of the solution that our faults consist, in the failure to hit upon it that those imperfections lie which are misfortunes rather in our moral relations.

But the morally evil character of our world rests ultimately not upon our faulty handling of the

problem, nor upon the difficulty of satisfactorily solving it, but upon the fact that it exists at all. For however satisfactory a solution of it we may appear to have attained, and however harmonious a society be the result, they have been attained only at great cost. The moral victory is won only by a pitiful carnage of possible and *a priori* innocent satisfactions. The irony of the ethical situation lies in the fact that each sin refrained from, as each sin committed, means the loss of a real good. A possible satisfaction has been foregone. The moral is really no less "red in tooth and claw" than the natural world. It is as wanton in its suppression of values as is the physical order in its destruction of facts.

Could we believe that the rejected goods were only counterfeit, could we believe that the selves to which we must die were not worth living for, optimism would not be so difficult. But we cannot. Vistas of rich and happy experience, as real and possible as the good we follow, open out before us every day; and from them the limitations of our natures alone force us to turn away.

The fulfilment of our final, circumscribed purpose cannot alter the fact that other purposes have been lost in the attainment, or discount the "might have beens," any more than the happy issue of the metaphysical world-process can conceal, though it may atone for, the immense waste of good by which the successful *dénouement* has been brought to pass. We may rise upon the stepping-stones of our dead selves

to higher things, but those selves are none the less dead, and with them have been for ever eliminated from the universe capacities of full and satisfying life, for the loss of which Reality is, absolutely speaking, so much the poorer. In short, more interests exist than can co-exist in harmony, there is a greater potentiality of good than can be actualized.

It is here, and in the consequent struggle between interests and goods, that the real secret of Evil lies. The fact that we are so cramped in the pursuit of the good both by the inner constitution of our nature and the outer conditions of our life that we must choose and forgo, renouncing vast fields of experience in order that others may be developed, marks more profoundly the existence of moral imperfection than do the sin and suffering which result therefrom. It is worse from the point of view of the problem of Evil that there should be some things which we ought not to do, than that we should do them.

I do not mean by this to advocate pessimism or to apologize for sin. The moral obligation is imperative if human happiness is to be attained. Virtue is a *sine qua non* of the realization of the sovereign Good. And the sacrifices it necessitates do not in point of fact wholly impoverish our nature. We can sufficiently develop enough interests, sufficiently fulfil enough purposes, sufficiently actualize enough possibilities of good to realize a full and happy life, harmonious with the social ideal. Physiologically, moreover, the fact

of life would seem to justify its own existence. Even the poorest and most repressed lives yield enough happiness to make them, if not positively valuable, at least tolerable, and thus to secure their own continuance.

Nor, I think, are we forced to so great a measure of theoretic pessimism as might at first seem pressed upon us. A facile and unmitigated optimism is indeed scarcely tenable. In practice we have either to whitewash the truth to keep it sweet and clean, or to hush it up. Only when many of its features have been veiled and painted is its face the face of God for us. So, too, in philosophic theory it is a Procrustean system that fits the true to the measure of the beautiful and the good, or the morally desirable to the measure of the real. For it is hard to see how, if untortured, the yearning after the Beatific Vision can find its satisfaction in any vision of the totality of existence, even though it be seen under all the grandeur of "the aspect of eternity." That features of the world have been found evil and ugly is part and parcel of the eternal truth about the world. The fact is not irrational. It is neither contradictory nor inexplicable. It takes its place along with other facts in the causal nexus. But it conclusively thwarts, as it seems to me, the effort to find in Reality, absolutely considered, an object in which the demands for aesthetic and moral as well as for logical and "natural" perfection shall find their satisfaction and their peace. Otherwise, indeed,

the fact must knock logic as well as morals on the head. For it satisfies no sense save that of humour to proclaim it to be part of the beauty of the world that we find it ugly, part of its goodness that we find it evil.

The truth, however, that the totality of existence is imperfect, need only slightly, if at all, mar what I will call, in contradistinction to the absolute, the ultimate goodness of the world. This point is perhaps best raised and brought home in the form in which it has engaged the attention of theology. The redeemed, perfected soul in Paradise must be absolutely happy. Otherwise it would not be in Paradise, but in Purgatory. Other exigencies of the doctrine of immortality, however, demand that at the same time the soul should remember its earthly and imperfect past. But must this not involve a contradiction? Will not the soul's bliss in the Beatific Vision be necessarily alloyed by this knowledge?

The Church answers this question by appealing to the cleansing power of the divine grace. The sense of the divine forgiveness wipes out the sense of sin. Knowledge of the past remains, to be sure; knowledge, if you will, that the past has been sinful, but sorrow and repentance have disappeared in the feeling that the past has been atoned for and pardoned in God's eyes, and that the soul is *now* pure and at one with the divine will. As Folco tells Dante:

> Non però qui si pente, ma si ride,
> Non della colpa, ch' a mente non torna,
> Ma del valore ch' ordinò e provide.[1]

It may be, of course, that this view in ultimate analysis is untenable, and that it is unthinkable that memory of past evil should not to some degree chill delight in present good. In that case, unless with the mystics we frankly abandon the satisfaction of the scientific interest as a factor in happiness, the world is not only absolutely imperfect but ultimately imperfect as well. Still our interests as they stand display characteristics which tend to justify the theological contention in some measure at least, and to suggest that the clouding of perfection by the inclusion within it of memory or knowledge of imperfection would be almost negligible.

Take, in the first place, the moral and aesthetic aspirations — the demands of our nature for a righteous and beautiful world. These are interests whose direct dealings are with the present. It is their aim to find or to create immediate experience of a quality in which they can rest content. That experience once attained, the process by which it has been reached no longer matters to them. Their only concern is with the fruition of value, and the value is independent of the character of the soil in which it has been grown. Our aspiration for beauty, for instance, would be satisfied were the world suddenly to turn beautiful. Our eye would

[1] *Paradiso*, ix. 103-105.

not be pained by the knowledge that heretofore there had been ugliness in existence. So, too, in the course of moral progress, the failing that has been overcome becomes unimportant, as far as the estimation of present value is concerned. We judge of a man's worth by what he is here and now, not by what he has been. The fact that he has fought and conquered is enough. And in the inner experience of the struggling individual, whether he represent it to himself in religious or in merely ethical terms, the theological contention is amply justified. The sense of having made good wipes away the stain of having been evil. The sin repented of and the weakness overcome no longer detract from our self-respect. In the sight of the moral ideal they are forgiven and obliterated. Though they were as scarlet they are washed white as snow. It is not merely that they are whitewashed, but that, as far as the regenerate experience is concerned, they are removed. Under the aspect of eternity, indeed, they still exist, and must be reckoned as part of the truth about the world, but in estimating the ultimate value of the world, or the value of the world at any one moment *sub specie boni*, they have no being. The waters of Eunoë—forgetfulness of evil and remembrance of good only—of which Dante tells us, do not run on the summit of Purgatory alone, their streams overflow to sweeten and refresh the daily life of every human soul.

At the basis of this moral and religious experi-

ence perhaps lies the psychological commonplace that recollection of past evil is often not itself an evil thing. *Forsan et haec*, we may murmur of much that at the moment appears intolerable. There is some kindly alchemy of our nature which distils most of our memories nearly clear of sadness. When we recall past suffering, we recall, as a rule, merely the fact that we have suffered, not *what* we have suffered. The pain of illness, the grief at loss have faded. And even if the fact still rings with value the resonance is deadened and remote.

I would suggest, too, in passing, that the same psychological commonplace may account for our ability to oppose a "scientific" interest in things to our moral and aesthetic attitudes towards them, to view the world dispassionately without regard to the reaction their immediate presence tends to provoke, and to think them rational at the same time that we feel them to be evil. Had memory not this happy characteristic, were the past as vibrant with immediate value as the present, one might well question whether the principle of sufficient reason could ever have rid itself of moral and aesthetic predispositions. Only from the "immortal calm" of a past on which all the storms of value have subsided, could we perhaps get some hint of the true nature of those silent currents which bear all the toss and tempest of the present on their surface. However that may be, our interest in the past is almost entirely historical and scientific. And the scientific interest in knowing

the truth finds, as the wise Parmenides found, nothing evil and nothing base, and does not despise what according to the standards of morals and aesthetics are the meanest things.

Considerations such as these—the absorption of the moral and aesthetic interests in immediate experience and that happy heedlessness of the past if only the present be good, the self-expurgation of memory, and the indifference of the scientific interest in knowing the truth to the moral values and bearings of things—would seem to justify, to some extent at least, an optimistic outlook as to the perfectibility of the world. Whether on other grounds the vision of perfection may not have to be regarded as an ideal limit continually approached but never attained, is a point which it does not fall within our province to discuss. Indeed we have already strayed too far from our subject.

To return, however, from our digression: we have, after dealing with moral evil, to give our attention to a phenomenon in which moral and physical evil are brought into direct relation with one another—I mean the apparent injustice with which Nature apportions reward to merit. Of all the questions connected with our problem, this perhaps is the most urgent. If physical evil always followed upon wrong-doing, the entire problem would be simplified, though by no means solved. Physical evil might then be explained as the due wages of sin, though the fact of sin would

still challenge us. But unfortunately for theology and philosophy there is apparently no such causal connection. The innocent are often the most roughly, the guilty the most tenderly handled by Nature. The best that can be said of her in this respect is that she is impartial in her dealings, and apparently indifferent to moral considerations—unmoral, though not immoral.

Such are the main aspects into which the problem of Evil may be resolved for purposes of discussion. They are sufficient to show how important and intimate the question is to all reflective thought. Yet one may perhaps ask at this point, "Where is the problem?" How is it that these facts that we have been discussing constitute a problem in any wise different or separate from the problem presented by the existence of any facts at all? Why should we metaphysically worry over the Evil that there is in the world? Why should we expect the world to be other than it is?

In truth, the problem of Evil viewed from one point of view is thoroughly sophisticated, and presupposes not only an articulate feeling for, and a reasoned discontent with, the faultiness of our world as we find it, but also much theological and ethical meditation, and a clear vision of the ideal. Perfection must have been begotten by the will, and conceived by the imagination, before our perpetual miscarriage can mean more than dumb physical suffering, and attain cosmic and meta-

physical significance. We must explicitly desire our world to be better before we wonder why of itself it is not so.

Yet at the same time the problem may also be regarded as among the oldest—perhaps, indeed, the foundation of all the questionings which haunt the human mind. It is the evil aspects of life which are the first to challenge the resources of our nature. Life we take for granted and accept the provision Nature has made for it with little comment or thanks. The satisfactory calls for no explanation. Like the gold piece, it is received at its face value everywhere, with no scrutiny of the date and place of its issue, and no demand for the promise of future redemption. Indeed, speculation itself is in a sense a mark of imperfection. However wide of the mark it may fly in the end, it is aimed in the beginning with practical intent. Primarily we do not live in order to reason, but we have to reason in order to live. The exercise of reason, it is true, like that of any other healthy function, is in part its own reward; but its explanation in point of origin and, to a large extent, of purpose, is to be found in the life and well-being it helps to attain and sustain. Reason is as much a tool as hand or tooth or claw, and more; and its function of collation, comparison, subsumption, and inference, is our most efficient means of adaptation and self-preservation. By its help we are building out of chaotic experience an orderly world such as may

be a secure and commodious dwelling for ourselves and a fitting habitation for our ideals. *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.* For such knowledge enables him the more surely and easily to foresee, to prepare for, and to direct the future to good purpose.

In science the practical nature of speculation is readily seen. Science frankly confesses that her effort to understand and formulate the world is originally inspired by a solicitude for our safety and happiness. Her interest may have grown, indeed, to include investigation for its own sake, but the direction of that interest is still in the main practical and productive of practical results. And the popular denunciation of philosophy as useless has for argument not that her ideal is worthless, but that it cannot be attained. There is no one, I think, who would not admit the advantage of knowing absolute truth if we could. The objection is that we cannot.

If, then, speculation be essentially practical, evolved like any other function by the exigencies of the occasion for the sake of coping with them, its operation would cease to be important as soon as perfect and permanent adjustment of the organism to its environment was secured. For a perfect world we should require no justifications. It would be irrelevant and superfluous to seek behind or beyond its existence for its explanation. The well in which its truth dwelt would be so

transparent that one need look no further than the surface to see the bottom. From moment to moment the mere fact of its existence and the perfection of its appearance could completely absorb all thought and pacify all thinking.

But where Nature fails or foils us we are startled. Our instincts are found to be inadequate in their guidance and adjustment. The fact of life cannot be taken for granted, or its provisions for happiness accepted as a birthright. Consciousness, instead of coming into that estate of joyous contemplation and free and harmonious activity to which it feels itself the heir, is obliged to make a living. It must stand over instinct; it must direct, stimulate, and restrain activity. It is this aspect of its life that provokes it to discursive and speculative thought. It is the evil facts that set it its first problem and of which it first seeks the causes, if by knowledge thereof it may provide against them in the future. The crudest of fetish and devil worship is in its way an answer to our problem. For the assumption of unfriendly beings at work in Nature is an induction from, and an explanation of, the facts which are problematic. And, finally, as its grasp of its immediate facts becomes wider and more and more complicated with other ranges of experience, and as its vision of their significance and their implication with the rest of the world-order grows more clear, this speculation to which the existence of Evil gives rise, not only formulates its own problems more adequately and offers to

them more profound solutions, but raises as well other problems of science and philosophy.

It is with these more profound solutions, naturally, that philosophy is most concerned and we shall have most to do. Generally the problem is directly raised in connection with the problem of the existence of God; always after the first animistic explanation of the world has been outgrown, it bears some latent reference thereto. The conclusion, it is true, to which a study of it may force us, may be an atheistic interpretation of the world; but we can never reach that conclusion wholly innocent of some consideration of the possibility of the existence of a deity.

Indeed, the problem of Evil in its most popular significance, and in that with which we have to deal with it in Plotinus, is the problem of reconciling the hypothesis of a good and beneficent deity with existence of an apparently evil and imperfect world. Or, since omnipotence is commonly regarded as a necessary attribute of divinity, it asks how God can be at once omnipotent and entirely good. For, given the conjunction of the premises in question, we are entitled *a priori* to infer a perfect world in which there is no appearance of evil whatsoever. But the apparent result is quite other than the logical conclusion to be drawn from the premises. The world which we find, far from being the blameless order we should expect, is a world in which there is every appearance of evil and imperfection. How

then does all-powerful beneficence tolerate, much less create it? Create, I say, because goodness unopposed, as the assertion of its omnipotence implies, could bring into being no other than a perfect universe, if it is to be true to itself and to our definition of it; tolerate, because the divine beneficence must imply at the very least a dissatisfaction with what is, as profound, and a desire for what ought to be, as keen, as our own, while its omnipotence signifies the non-existence for it of those limitations in power which alone seem to hinder us from realizing our ideal of a happy and perfect order. Confronted, then, with the discrepancy between the conclusion to which our premises entitle us, and that to which the facts force us, we return to examine and question the premises. Have we been right in assuming them, and, if so, how are we to explain the apparent illogicality of the conclusion?

From this return one of four possible trains of thought may result. We may reaffirm the validity of the premises, and seek to reconcile the apparent contradiction between what should be their logical conclusion and what appears to be their actual outcome. This method of dealing with the problem has been popular since the rise of Christianity. The religious consciousness has always tended to unite, and has indeed been justified in uniting to a certain extent the natural and moral attributes of God as world-power and world-ideal. Both the

conception of the efficient and that of the final relation of God to the universe have sufficient reason in the history of speculation, and these natural tendencies Christianity has reinforced, raising both ideas to the absolute degree, and declaring the Godhead to be absolute goodness and absolute power.

The reconciliation of the two attributes, or what amounts in this case to the same thing, of the goodness of God with the imperfection of the world, may be attempted in two ways. We may, on the one hand, adopt the Christian doctrine of free will and an original fall. God, we may say, out of the plenitude of goodness and power created a perfect world and perfect man. First the angels and then man sinned of their own free will, and through no fault of their Creator, and by their sin brought Evil into the world. The logical conclusion from the premises, and the actual outcome would have coincided, had it not been for the pride of Lucifer and the disobedience of Adam. And by the process of redemption the world as it is is in part being slowly but surely restored to the status of the world as it ought to be, and as it wholly would have been had the fall not occurred; till in the end, when the corrective and redemptive work has been accomplished, as much of the world as has not been altogether lost shall regain perfection.

On the other hand, we may deny that there is any real discrepancy between the logical and the

actual conclusion. The discrepancy is illusory. Evil has no real existence *qua* evil. It is but an appearance, a partial aspect, an erroneous opinion, a finite point of view. The existence of this illusion we may leave unexplained as in many mystic systems; or we may attempt to deduce it from Reality, and give it positive foothold in Reality as a misunderstood fragment thereof, considering it either as a means towards perfection justified and transfigured by the end, or as an integral and contributive factor in perfection itself. We may "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us," or may regard them as something for which the totality of experience is absolutely the richer and better. Evil exists that God may triumph over and transcend it in an act of victory in which his perfection consists; the opposition of good and evil, that God may have the supreme happiness of identifying them in a higher unity. In a word, Evil is in reality transubstantiated.

The two other ways of dealing with our problem begin by asserting the failure of the derivative and transmutatory methods, and the impossibility of forcing the facts of the case into conformity with the conclusion which logically follows if both premises be true. Both premises, then, cannot be true. God cannot be both all-good and all-powerful. We must choose between the attributes.

The choice of the latter alternative lies, roughly

speaking, at the bottom of all so-called naturalistic cosmologies. They maintain the entire relativity of all moral distinctions to the human point of view, and their irrelevance to a Reality which they conceive as unmoral, and as equally expressed in good and evil alike. All thought of the world as a moral order is excluded as incompatible with the high indifference of that energy, or system, or substance, which underlies phenomena, and to whose proper perfection their moral character makes no difference; a power in whose sight, if it be possessed of it, all things and events are *sub specie aeternitatis* equally necessary, equally important, equally significant. In maintaining this indifference of the true nature of things to the judgments of value we pass upon them, and the independence of its perfection of their moral character and worth, all "naturalistic" systems are agreed, however much they may differ in conceiving its ultimate structure. Of this view in modern times Spinoza is a noble example, though it is shared and set forth by all mechanico-materialistic theories. In ancient philosophy it is most systematically and splendidly formulated by the Epicureans.

In the second place, we may stand by the idea that the universe is a moral order, morally governed and directed according to the purpose of a beneficent deity, and reconcile our faith with the facts of the case by supposing him not to be omnipotent. The divine beneficence, we may say, and its government

of the world for the best meet with real obstacles which limit their efficiency, and in part vitiate the character of the cosmic order. These limitations to the power of God may be conceived in a number of ways. The situation is perhaps most often conceived as a dualism of God and Matter or of God and the Devil. To God is opposed an inert and intractable, yet co-eternal substance, or an actively malignant principle of evil, or a conjunction of both, to whose lack of compliance to a divine creative act, or positive thwarting of the divine design, the imperfection of the world is to be attributed.

But other ways of conceiving this limitation are also possible. Some thinkers, for example, have suggested an absolute element of chance in the world with which the divine foresight is unable to cope successfully and the divine power unable to control. Or again, we might suppose God to be confronted with wills, uncreated and independent, rebellious to his purpose, and discordant with one another. In such a case Evil would be symptomatic of a real discord between the different parts of the universe, and the world-process might be conceived as God's attempt to reduce these warring elements to peace with one another and with himself. Or one might retain the moral significance of the world-process while dispensing with the notion of a God, or of any one supreme directing agent. Reality might be thought of as a discordant and, therefore, imperfect collection of eternal individuals, of whose lives we

ourselves represented moments or stages, and cosmic evolution as a possible progress on their part towards a final state of mutual adaptation in a sort of commonwealth of perfected and deified spirits, the attainment of which might be entirely a matter of their free will and effort.

Finally, we might reject every proposed method and take refuge in agnosticism, if indeed it is any solution of a problem to declare it insoluble; or deny both premises and reject not only the idea of a moral order in the world, but of a natural order as well, declaring the whole to be in reality chaotic and meaningless, and experience mere delirium. But for such a point of view there could be no problem of Evil, since a wholly irrational universe, if it could exist, would present no problems of any sort.

Such are the general types of solution which a study of the problem may suggest. I do not mean, however, that they are alternatives, and that philosophers may be labelled according as they hold one or the other. There is, it is true, a leading motive dominant in every philosophic treatment of the subject, but there is also (among the Greek thinkers) a use of other possible answers as subsidiary themes, generous to the point of discord. This is especially true of Plotinus. His main theme is, I venture to think, original, but it is interwoven with, and to some degree founded upon, reminiscences of almost every solution of the problem of Evil proposed by ancient philosophy.

It will be well to review briefly these reminiscences, and to trace in outline the development of the problem in ancient thought. It is fair, I think, to say that the problem of Evil does not appear as a definitely conceived philosophic problem before the time of Plato, even if it does so then. For Plato and Aristotle it is certainly not an interesting or important problem. Neither faces it directly. They merely find that in the course of solving other and to them far more vital questions they have answered it.

In fact, in one aspect of pre-Socratic thought we find an interest in the problem far more intense than that of the Platonic school, though the level on which it moves is theological rather than philosophical. Philosophy proper has little to say, but what I may call the "lay" thought of the period is preoccupied with the more immediate and practical phases of the question. Already in Homer we see the idea of the gods as righteous beings slowly rising out of an animistic conception of them as capricious, irresponsible sources of good and ill alike, and with this new and higher idea our problem appearing as the problem of reconciling with their moralized characters the existence of evil and suffering in the world. There, too, we are aware of the presence in germ of two great types of solution. On the one hand, we note the tendency to a dualistic opposition of some of the gods to others as of evil powers to good; on the other, the tendency to regard evil

as man's doing, suffering as the wages of sin, and sin as man's own fault. Of these two tendencies the later thought of the pre-Socratic period seems to be little more than a development. Where meditation upon "the ways of God to man" does not lead, as in the case of Theognis, to mere blind rebellion against them and rejection of the notion of a divine justice, it generally seeks to justify them, as with Pindar, Aeschylus and Sophocles, by explaining human misery as due to freely-willed human wrong-doing, or by combining this solution with the notion of a positively evil element (Matter, or the flesh, for instance) in the world, to whose existence and influence sin itself is ultimately due. This latter we find to be the thought of the religious mysteries.

Meantime the history of the philosophy proper of the time displays, as we have said, little or no reflection upon our problem. The prevalent attitude towards it, if attitude it can be called, is naturalistic, though we find a nascent dualism of God and Matter expressed by Pythagoras in its ethical, by Anaxagoras in its scientific implications; and in the system of Empedocles a dualism of two principles contending for mastery over an inert world-stuff, which is curiously anticipatory of some Neo-Platonic thought. But altogether, the connection of good and evil values with the terms of these oppositions seems vaguely felt and more vaguely expressed.

After an interim of Scepticism represented in philosophy by the Sophists, and in lay thought by Euripides, dualism reappears in the systems of Plato and Aristotle as the dominant method of dealing with our problem. As has already been said, the problem itself was of but secondary interest to each philosopher. Plato's treatment of it is more theological than philosophical, and is couched in figurative and mythological language. To the influence of the Good conceived as exerting both an efficient and a final causality in the world, he opposes another principle as the source of imperfection. This principle is variously conceived in response now to one, now to another interest; but the various conceptions and appellations, such as "not-being," "the other," "the great and the small," "the indeterminate," "matter," "void," etc., are left but vaguely related and with little in the way of reduction to a common denominator. Certain of the larger and more cosmic features of physical imperfection are referred directly to the intractability of this material principle; but those which bear directly upon human life, as suffering and misfortune, are regarded as the just results of moral evil. The existence of moral evil receives an elaborate but not altogether consistent explanation. The notions of a primal fall, of the misuse of free will, of transmigration and immortality are employed, but with insufficient attention to their implications. In the end, however, moral evil also

is derived from the intractability of Matter. The soul herself is invaded by its influence, and finds within herself a dualism of rational and irrational parts, the one akin to the divine, the other to the material principle. By their contest she is distraught, and through the blinding of reason by the solicitations of passion and sense she falls into sin. Virtue is knowledge, vice ignorance. Were there no Matter there would be no such solicitation, no ignorance, and no vice. The soul would always know the truth and do the right.

By Aristotle the problem was given greater precision though not greater importance. Plato had been so enamoured of the Ideal, and so preoccupied with the reminiscences thereof which he found in the world, that the residuum of recalcitrancy and formlessness, though noted by his eye, did not engage his attention. Aristotle, on the other hand, is essentially a man of science, preoccupied no more with one aspect of life than with another. His business is not the elucidation of the Ideal, but an accurate and unprejudiced description of the facts as he finds them. If his account of the universe includes an ideal element as an ultimate and controlling factor, it is not as a belief calculated to cheer and uphold the moral life, but primarily as a scientific hypothesis necessary to explain the motions and complete the dynamic unity of the world. Similarly, the existence of Evil does not arouse his repugnance, but his curiosity. He views

it dispassionately as a physician might disease, more interested in its diagnosis than in its cure. And the problem it presents resolves itself in the last resort into a question of analysing and relating to the hypothesis of the Good as the final cause of the world-process, certain kinetic and dynamic aberrations which it is incapable of explaining.

But his work to this end proved of great importance so far as the history of our problem is concerned. He did not, indeed, introduce any novel factors or explanations, but he developed and analysed at great length the ideas hinted at by Plato. The relation of the Good to the world received at his hands a profound and clear formulation. The concept of Matter, both as a necessary substratum of a world and as necessarily an obstacle to its perfection, he considered with great care, though, as we shall see later, not altogether adequately for our purpose. These are the two points of prime importance as regards our problem in the Aristotelian system.

After Aristotle the dualistic method of dealing with Evil disappeared for a time, and two novel forms of solution offered themselves: on the one hand the monism of the Stoics, on the other the naturalism of the Epicureans. The significance, however, of these systems, especially of that of the Stoics, lies in more than their suggestion of a new access to the problem. Before even the road pointed out by Plato and Aristotle could be

pursued to further advantage, it was necessary for speculation to pause and consider what its real object and question were. It was necessary, in a word, for the problem of Evil to be detached from other metaphysical problems and gain force and attention as a separate philosophical question. In the systems of neither Plato nor Aristotle had this been the case. Neither had approached it along what seem to us the lines of least resistance. To neither had occurred the direct question: How can the Evil in the world be reconciled with the goodness of God? It was, however, precisely in this form, so familiar to us, and with all the points and considerations of the question in its modern shape, that the problem presented itself to the Stoics. In them we find for the first time a true theodicy.

From the Stoic pantheism followed directly the necessary perfection of the world, in spite of all appearances in it to the contrary. God is the sustaining and animating soul and substance of the world; he and the world taken together as a single complete system and order are one and the same being, and this being is a living, intelligent, completely self-realized organism satisfied with its own intrinsic goodness and with no end beyond it. Further, the Stoics laid great stress on the argument of design. All things exist for the use and benefit of man; man exists to contemplate the glory and perfection of the world.

By this insistence upon the perfection and

beneficence of the world-order the problems of physical and moral evil were naturally raised in explicit and accentuated form. How reconcile with the existence of Evil the goodness of God, the rationality of the world-order, and the direction of all things to the best? If the world, for example, be designed to serve man's needs, how comes it that it also serves them so badly, and is not merely insufficient but absolutely inimical to the end to which it has been created? If there be gods or a God who regard justice, how comes it that the world is so unjust? Such were the questions hitherto answered, without being stated, that the Stoic put and replied to directly.

His first answer was to deny the existence of physical evil. What we call physical evil is a matter of erroneous opinion. To the wise and virtuous man nothing external is evil. For that alone is evil which harms one's proper perfection, and the proper perfection of man is virtue. Suffering and misfortune cannot touch it, and hence are matters of indifference to it. Furthermore, man by virtue of his reason shares in the point of view of the whole. The events which are indifferent to him as a part of the whole, will be seen by him, so far as he rises to the cosmic point of view, to be necessary parts of the system of facts which compose the universe, and, as such, necessary factors towards its perfection, *i.e.* positively good.

But having thus denied, the Stoic proceeds with

curious inconsistency to justify the existence of physical evil. This he attempts in various ways. Though the parts of the world taken by themselves are imperfect, together they form a perfect whole. Evil is unavoidably incidental to the design of Nature, a by-product in the generation of good. It is good put to a wrong use, or it is to be palliated because of the good end it serves.

Moral evil, however, presented a graver problem. How does it happen that in a perfect universe there should be any who do not share in the point of view of the whole, and see things in their true values? This question was the more insistent, as the Stoics thought most men to be vicious and were bound to admit that to all appearances they flourished.

The discrepancy between merit and reward they again dealt with by a denial of the facts. The wicked do not flourish, the good are not cast down, since external goods are as hollow as external evils. And the same inconsistency is repeated of justifying that the existence of which is denied. Misfortune is a test of character. The value of the good is enhanced by the price we have to pay for it. The misfortunes of the wicked are by another inconsistency explained on punitive grounds.

But how explain the fact of sin at all? God cannot be responsible for it; on that point the Stoics were explicit. They then not unnaturally took refuge in the device of free will and human

responsibility, which they were at great pains to reconcile with their pantheistic determinism. They also called to their aid arguments already used in connection with physical evil. Evil is a necessary by-product of virtue. Sin is turned into good in the end. Finally, they invoked the interdependence of contraries. Without vice there would be no virtue. By contrast with vice the value of virtue is enhanced. Sin is like the villain in the play: without it the spectacle would be incomplete and imperfect.

The Stoic position was denied *in toto* by the Epicureans, who adopted a thoroughly naturalistic method of dealing with the problem. Their metaphysics, founded on the atomism of Democritus, involved *a priori* a rejection of the hypotheses of final causes, design, and a moral government of the world. Reality in ultimate analysis turned out to be a fortuitous concourse of atoms moving in empty space or the void, according not to the intelligent plan or purpose of a guiding reason, but to a law in part of mechanical causation, in part of spontaneous self-determination. This rejection of the teleological interpretation of Nature, already implied as it was by their system, the Epicureans supported precisely by an appeal to the existence of Evil in the world. The argument from design they attacked with especial severity. As man is *a priori* but one of the innumerable combinations incidental to the concourse of atoms, so the world of human interests

is an insignificant by-product of no particular importance or relevance to the course of Nature as a whole. To the Stoic arguments drawn from the apparent adaptation of the world to human purposes, they opposed the incompleteness of such adaptation. The existence of physical evil is sufficient proof that the gods are not beneficent. The existence of moral evil is enough to show that they are not just. The world is full of wickedness, vice goes unpunished, virtue unrewarded. The hypothesis of a moral government of it is absurd on the face of it.

The Stoic theodicy was also attacked by the new Scepticism initiated by Pyrrho and carried on by Carneades in the New Academy. According to the Sceptics positive knowledge of any sort was impossible. Good and evil were merely relative values, appearances of things to us, not necessarily relevant to the nature of the thing in itself. We cannot know that there is a God, much less that he is wise and beneficent. But not content with resting his case on epistemological considerations, the Sceptic also urged against the Stoic the criticisms of the Epicureans, and at length involved him in the dilemma that either his Providence must be ignorant of its power, or neglectful of human affairs, or incapable of judging what is for the best.

The Epicureans, however, they attacked with greater vigour. The irrationality of the Stoic theology was, they held, no greater than the

absurdity of that of the Epicureans, and had the advantage of providing an emotional and religious sanction for moral conduct. Belief in a moral government of the world was to be provisionally admitted and respected because of its practical value. It was a good working theory even for the agnostic. The same sceptical point of view was urged again by Aenesidemus and Sextus Empiricus.

The Scepticism of the Academy plays a part in the history of our problem in many ways similar to that of the Sophists. As Sophism called all the thought that had preceded it to account, so Scepticism proceeded to eviscerate the positive teaching of the Stoics and Epicureans, and to assert once more the impossibility of knowing the true nature of things, and of solving any metaphysical questions, the problem of Evil among them. And like its earlier analogue it too proves to be but an interregnum. Out of the midst of the Sophistic movement came Socrates, and after him Plato; the former to reaffirm the practical, the latter the absolute and theoretic validity of knowledge, and thus to restore to experience a rational and moral coherence, metaphysically explained and justified. In like manner out of the later Empiricism in which Stoicism and Epicureanism were dissolved, there arises a new interest in metaphysical speculation, a new faith in its power to yield truth, a new endeavour to give positive answers to the great problems of philosophy. This renaissance of the

metaphysical spirit disclaimed for itself all originality. It pretended to no more than a rediscovery of antiquity. It was essentially a return for inspiration to names of great repute, a growing interest in the older ways of dealing with the deep questions of philosophy, a reviving faith in the older solutions proffered. It believed itself to be regenerating and reinterpreting ancient, authoritative thought. The two names which became the watchwords of the new movement, the two systems to which it aimed at giving new expression and new life, were those of Pythagoras and Plato. Its great prophet and exponent, at least so far as the cult of Plato is concerned, is Plotinus.

For our problem, the interest of the early Neo-Pythagoreanism lies in its revival of dualism as a means of dealing with Evil. Like their traditional forbears, the Neo-Pythagoreans reduced the heterogeneity of the universe to a basic opposition between Monad and Dyad, the odd and the even. But for them this numerical opposition became the nucleus of a thorough-going metaphysical dualism with which the Aristotelian and Platonic dualisms were amalgamated. The Monad was identified with God, spirit, mind, the good; the Dyad with matter, irrationality, indeterminateness, evil. Together with this metaphysical dualism went a whole eschatological and religious system of a mystic type. The soul was contrasted with the body, spirit with matter, and the whole life of the senses objectified

in the multiple and phenomenal world with a higher state of ecstatic communion and union with the deity. Senses, body, matter, world are essentially corrupt. The spirit is of like if not of the same substance with the divine. Tainted by the world, the flesh, and the dyad, she wanders from body to body. The end of the moral life is to escape from the sensible world and to attain communion with God. The necessary means are a life of strictest human virtue, of ascetic self-discipline according to the Pythagorean rule, and of final ecstatic transcendence and unconsciousness of all earthly things.

From such a point of view physical evil was to be attributed in part to the recalcitrancy of dyadic Matter, in part to human misconduct of which it is the divinely ordained punishment. Sin is due to a conflict of appetite and reason within the soul, with which the soul is forced to take sides, and in taking sides is responsible for her choice. Upon the fact of free will there is considerable insistence, though no analysis of its meaning. The wrong choice of the soul, however, is ultimately referable to Matter. Were there no Matter there would be no incentive to the misuse of freedom, no sin, no punishment, no suffering due to other causes, no evil of any sort.

The Neo-Pythagorean, however, was not yet free of the problem. To his exoteric dualism we are told that he added an esoteric monism. "According to their highest teaching (ἀνωτάτω λόγος)," Sim-

plicius quotes from Eudorus, "we must say that the Pythagoreans hold the One to be the principle of all things; according to a secondary teaching (δεύτερος λόγος) that they hold that there are two principles of created things, the One and the nature opposed to it. . . ."[1] But of their derivation of the Dyad from the Monad they give no explanation, and thus after all their pains left the crux of the problem untouched. This ἀνωτάτω λόγος becomes later the theme of Plotinus's final and most magnificent attempt at solution. Meantime, it was ignored or rejected by Plutarch and Philo Judaeus,[2] who developed the dualism of the δεύτερος λόγος.

The theodicy of Plutarch starts with the assumption that God is good and author only of the good in the world. God is both the efficient and the final cause of all things. He is the end toward which all things strive; but he is also an overruling and beneficent providence directing all things to the best. Whence, then, Evil?

The Stoic suggestion that apparent evil may be resolved into real good he rejects *in toto*. He finds not only irrational, but morally repugnant, any attempt to make the perfect responsible for the imperfect. Indeed, he devotes the whole six chapters of one treatise, and eight chapters of another, to a very able exposé and refutation of the Stoic theodicy.

[1] Simplicius, *Phys.* 181. -13. Cf. Diogenes, viii. 24.

[2] Cf., however, Vacherot, *Histoire de l'École d'Alexandrie*, vol. i. pp. 151-152, who finds also in Philo some anticipations of the Plotinian doctrine of emanation.

Evil, in fine, is as real as good, and its presence in the world can only be reconciled with the goodness of God by supposing it to be due to the opposition of another principle—Matter. But the concept of Matter as it had been left by Aristotle involves certain difficulties to which we shall later have occasion to recur, and Plutarch finds himself obliged, not only to modify the Aristotelian teaching, but also to introduce a third element, a positive and malignant principle of Evil whose influence shall account for the otherwise unaccountable opposition of Matter to the Divine Will.

Physical evil is attributable in part immediately to the presence of the malignant principle, in part to be explained as the punishment of sin. In the explanation of sin we come upon the familiar opposition of soul to body, and within the soul of reason to the irrational appetites. We are virtuous as long as reason dominates. Sin is the usurpation of the will by the irrational. The will, however, is free. It is to blame for its evil choice. The apparent discrepancy between reward and merit is accounted for on the hypothesis of transmigration. We are reaping in this life the fruit of past existences. The difficulty involved in the earlier Neo-Pythagorean doctrine of giving any reason for the lapse of the soul from an original state of perfection is avoided by the doctrine that the soul is at first, if not at the last, of a mixed and imperfect nature.

In Philo we find a more extreme dualism and mysticism. His God is superintelligible and beyond all predicates. All that we can comprehend concerning him is *that* he exists, but beyond his existence we can know nothing of him. Communion, or rather union, with him is only to be attained by some superrational faculty of experience. Yet in such union only is the true perfection of the soul attained. The natural complement of this mystic insistence upon the ineffability of God and the sovereign Good, is a keen sense of metaphysical evil. There is only one perfection and that is God. Not to be God, then, is *prima facie* to be evil. The world is, as it were, condemned unheard. The fact of its existence is sufficient evidence against it, quite apart from subsequent evidence respecting its character. The physical and moral evil, indeed, with which we find it vitiated are only to be expected.

But where is there any sufficient reason for such a world, or indeed for any world at all? For its existence God would not, for its essence he could not be responsible.[1] Philo falls back on the hypothesis of Matter, as a co-eternal principle with God. In the face of its utter evil and corruption, God, being good, is bound to create, *i.e.* to bring what good out of, or rather into Matter he can. The existence, then, of Matter is responsible for the existence of a world at all, its essence for the failure of the world to embody even a modicum of perfection.

[1] Cf. p. 38, note 2.

Physical evil Philo refers in part to Matter directly, in part to the sinfulness of man. Sin is due to the corruption of the soul by Matter. Philo's vituperation of the body and the senses is unrestrained. Virtue consists in as complete an abstraction from them as possible. The reward of virtue is a final transcendence and annihilation of all things earthly or cosmic. For her enchainment and corruption by the body the soul is responsible. Men are originally fallen angels. The reason of the fall, and the difficulty of explaining how a perfect will could misuse its freedom are left unexplained. But once in the body there begins for her a round of birth and death governed by a cosmic law of moral causality. In the end the purified soul returns to God. A hell awaits the incorrigible.

With this straightforward mystic and dualistic way of treating the problem, Philo mingles Stoic arguments. He appeals to the advantage of the whole to justify the suffering of the part. And he denies the fact that the innocent are overwhelmed with calamities, the wicked with favours. Nothing is good but virtue, nothing evil but vice.

The minor members of the school require little comment. Maximus of Tyre is more dualist than Stoic in his way of dealing with our problem. Numenius is an out-and-out dualist of Philonic type, but Plutarchian in his doctrine of Matter, and in his assumption of a third principle of active malignant evil. Celsus maintained dualism against

Christian doctrine, at the same time attacking the conception of a personal devil. Finally in the Hermetic writings we get a dualism and general doctrine like that of Numenius, much crossed and confused by a pantheistic tendency of thought that reminds one of the Stoics.

So much by way of introduction.

CHAPTER I

SOME GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE PLOTINIAN SYSTEM

The problem of Evil presents itself to Plotinus in the explicit form in which it challenged the Stoics, Epicureans, and earlier Neo-Platonists. In the opening lines of the first of his two treatises "On Providence" he tells us that though it is evident on *a priori* grounds and from his arguments that "to ascribe the being and constitution of the universe to spontaneity or chance is absurd, and the mark of a man who lacks the faculties both of reasoning and of perception," yet "it will be well to take up the argument from the beginning and make a searching inquiry into the way in which each particular component has come into being and been created. For as some of these have been, as it were, wrongly created, doubts have been raised concerning universal Providence, and some have been prompted to say that there is no Providence, others, that the universe has been brought into being by an evil Creator."[1] Neither answer, how-

[1] iii. 2, § 1 (254). The references are to the Volkmann Text in the Teubner series. 1. Τὸ μὲν τῷ αὐτομάτῳ καὶ τύχῃ διδόναι

ever, will Plotinus tolerate for a moment. His task is to allay these doubts, to establish the certainty of a moral government of the world, in a word to

> assert eternal Providence
> And justify the ways of God to man.

Before, however, entering upon our examination of the Plotinian theodicy, it will be well to give some attention to such features of his system in general as may make our later discussion more to the point. In his theology Plotinus is, if possible, more of a mystic than Philo. But his conclusion, unlike that of Philo, is not merely the expression of the home-sickness of a profoundly mystic spirit for an ineffable peace and perfection such as our world cannot give or even help to portray. To deny, indeed, that one of whom his biographer relates that he saw God many times face to face in ecstatic vision during his life, was such a spirit, and that he was forever haunted by a "*nostalgie de l'au-delà et de la sainteté*," would be absurd. Plotinus is one of the great mystics of all times. But his is also one of the great intellects. His reasoning is none the less profound for his ability, as he fancies, to

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τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ σύστασιν ὡς ἄλογον καὶ ἀνδρὸς οὔτε νοῦν οὔτε αἴσθησιν κεκτημένου, δῆλόν που καὶ πρὸ λόγου καὶ πολλοὶ ἱκανοὶ καταβέβληνται δεικνύντες τοῦτο λόγοι· τὸ δὲ τίς ὁ τρόπος τοῦ ταῦτα γίνεσθαι ἕκαστα καὶ πεποιῆσθαι, ἐξ ὧν καὶ ἐνίων ὡς οὐκ ὀρθῶς γινομένων ἀπορεῖν περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς προνοίας συμβαίνει, καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἐπῆλθε μηδὲ εἶναι εἰπεῖν, τοῖς δὲ ὡς ὑπὸ κακοῦ δημιουργοῦ ἐστι γεγενημένος [ὁ κόσμος], ἐπισκέψασθαι προσήκει ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὸν λόγον λαβόντας.

get beyond it in the end. He puts his mysticism to metaphysical and rational test and forces it upon us as a logical conclusion. He tells us why God *must* be ineffable, apart from the fact that he finds him so.

As has been said already, Plotinus considered himself the interpreter of Plato. Not unnaturally, then, the direction of his thought was suggested by the Platonic system, as he understood it. Of that system, the problem of the One and the Many was the fundamental consideration, as, indeed, it had been the burning question of all Greek philosophy since first the Milesians by their dictum that the world was substantially one, led men to ask *how*, and then *whether* it could develop into multiplicity. The Platonic treatment was suggested by Socrates, who had eschewed metaphysics, and limited his search for unity among the many to what might prove relevant to human interests (conceived rather narrowly) and useful in human life. But Plato pressed his search for the One far beyond the point at which Socrates had discreetly abandoned it. It landed him in the world of Platonic Ideas, a realm of glorified class-concepts, where the humble Socratic universals, abstracted from a comparison of particular instances in the service of a common virtue and a stable happiness, awoke to find themselves τὰ ὄντως ὄντα, the only realities, endowed with all metaphysical functions and perfections, eternal, immutable, perfect, the final and efficient causes, each of them, of its proper particulars and of all the being and

goodness they possessed. In a word, instead of their being justified, as with Socrates, by their relevance to life, life was justified by reference to them as the bases of its facts and the sources of its values.[1]

By thus seeing the world double, Plato imagined that he had explained it, though, as Aristotle pointed out, he had only increased the number of phenomena that needed to be accounted for. As regards the quest of the One, however, it must be said that Plato made some real progress into the interior of the world of Ideas when he discovered in their perfection a characteristic common to all the Ideas, and made of it the Idea of the Good, a sort of universal of universals. But he did not push his way farther, though it led to a rich and unexplored country of implications, in the direction, that is, of the El Dorado of the absolute One.

Plotinus follows in Plato's footsteps. Like him, he passes beyond the phenomenal world to an archetypal order, eternally creating and sustaining it. But he does not make the Platonic *salto mortale* from the one to the other, but uses as an intermediary step a concept furnished indeed by Plato, but in a different context, to wit, that of the World-Soul in the *Timaeus*.

The propriety of introducing such an intermediary principle is evident on psychological grounds. The state of consciousness corresponding

[1] This interpretation of Plato, of course, would not be held by some modern critics.

to the Platonic Idea or the Intelligible world of Plotinus, was static and contemplative reason, the νοῦς θεωρητικός of Aristotle. It had neither part in, nor consciousness of, the vital functions, the operations of sense, or even the processes of discursive and synthetic thought and the actions of practical virtue. On the other hand, matter and body cannot perceive,[1] or think,[2] or practise virtue,[3] and what life they possess is due to the presence within them of a foreign principle.[4] These activities then require a separate metaphysical principle called by Plotinus ψυχή or Soul.

This principle is incorporeal and immortal.[5] It is life.[6] The virtues are native to it.[7] Its synthetic reason seeks to know the eternal.[8] In a word, it bears the stamp of the divine.

But it is by no means an ultimate principle. It is not absolutely one. It is one-many, both indivisible and divisible. It is like the form of an object, which, though divided in one sense, if the object be divided, in another still keeps its unity.[9] For example, if a pitcher be broken to fragments, it is still a broken *pitcher*. The "*pitcher-ness*" is

[1] iv. 7, § 6, 7 (461) [vol. ii. pp. 126-128].
[2] iv. 7, § 8 (461-462) [vol. ii. p. 127].
[3] iv. 7, § 8 (462) [vol. ii. pp. 129-130].
[4] iv. 7, § 8 (458) [vol. ii. p. 122, ll. 10-20].
[5] iv. 7, § 10 (464) [vol. ii. p. 137].
[6] iv. 7, § 11 (465-466) [vol. ii. p. 139].
[7] iv. 7, § 10 (464) [vol. ii. pp. 137-138].
[8] iv. 7, § 10 (465) [vol. ii. p. 139].
[9] iv. 2, § 1 (362) [vol. ii. p. 5, l. 8 *et seq.*].

spread throughout every part, and is in its entirety present in every part. Else we could not say of each fragment that it was part of a pitcher, and of nothing else. Plotinus's own example is that of a colour which is unaffected by the division of the coloured material. By the aid of such similes, then, we must think of the soul as unextended in herself, residing nowhere in particular, yet present in her entirety in every part of the body. And as each soul stands to her body, so the World-Soul stands to the universe.

The imperfect unity of the soul is again betrayed by the relations of the individual souls to the World-Soul. This question put Plotinus to some perplexity. All souls cannot be one in the sense of being ultimately one consciousness. The same subject cannot perceive and think in all, for in that case every one would experience everybody else's experience.[1] Yet if the soul is not one, how explain the unity of the universe? Plotinus's treatment of the difficulty is as follows. The World-Soul is a unity in which all souls are bound. She is present in all souls precisely as a science is present by implication in its entirety in each of its parts.[2] Each logically involves and potentially contains all the others and the whole. We select now one part, now another, but each would be useless out of its

[1] iv. 9, § 1 (477-478) [vol. ii. pp. 153-154].

[2] iv. 9, § 5 (480) [vol. ii. p. 157]. Cf. iii. 9, § 2 (357) [vol. i. p. 348].

relation to the others, and to the whole. If it could be detached there could be no logical deduction. Thus, if a single theorem be given, it contains both all that it presupposes, and all that follows from it. In a similar way individual souls are related to one another, and to the World-Soul. In her internal relations, then, as well as her external, the soul is a one-many, and not a pure One.[1]

Finally, the operations of synthetic reason betray a dependent and relative nature. Discursive thought contains within itself neither the material, the formal, nor the final conditions of its thinking. It reasons *about* data given it by sense, *according* to *a priori* principles, *in order* to acquire knowledge. It is an activity of pursuit, not of possession. Its aim is self-confessedly to transcend and annihilate itself in a state of immediate and intuitive apprehension of truth, which provides its own object neither *a priori* nor *a posteriori* and to no other end save its own existence. At least such, I think, is something of Plotinus's meaning when he tells us that—

"Of the kinds of knowledge which exist in the rational soul, one is of the objects of perception—if, indeed, we ought to speak of 'knowledge' of such things and not rather give it the name of 'opinion'—and, as facts are antecedent to it, so it is a reflection of facts.

"But the other, which is the real knowledge, is derived from the objects of the understanding, and

[1] iv. 9, § 5 (480-481) [vol. ii. p. 157].

entering into the rational soul from Mind, is concerned with no perceptible object.

"And inasmuch as this is real knowledge, it in itself is the object of its own activity, and contains within itself both the object of thought and the faculty of thinking. For within it is the Mind, primal, always in harmony with itself, itself a motive power; the Mind does not strive to possess, as one that has not, or as one that longs to acquire or to explore data not already at hand (for such are the experiences of Soul); but, itself at rest, it at once embraces all things in itself, yet without any exercise of thought for the purpose of bringing them into being."[1]

Soul, then, or ψυχή, cannot be regarded as an ultimate principle. Her content is many and she seeks therein the One; irrational and full of error, and she would find therein truth. Her means are discursive thought, which can at the best bring things to synthetic unity; her ends, immediate and synoptic vision. Such a condition requires further explana-

[1] v. 9, § 7 (560-561) [vol. ii. p. 254, l. 20 *et seq.*]. Cf. v. 3, § 2 (497 *et seq.*) [vol. ii. p. 179]. 7. αἱ δὲ ἐπιστῆμαι ἐν ψυχῇ λογικῇ οὖσαι αἱ μὲν τῶν αἰσθητῶν—εἰ δεῖ ἐπιστήμας τούτων λέγειν, πρέπει δὲ αὐταῖς τὸ τῆς δόξης ὄνομα—ὕστεραι τῶν πραγμάτων οὖσαι εἰκόνες εἰσὶ τούτων· αἱ δὲ τῶν νοητῶν, αἳ δὴ καὶ ὄντως ἐπιστῆμαι, παρὰ νοῦ εἰς λογικὴν ψυχὴν ἐλθοῦσαι αἰσθητὸν μὲν οὐδὲν νοοῦσι· καθόσον δέ εἰσιν ἐπιστῆμαι, εἰσὶν αὐτὰ ἕκαστα ἃ νοοῦσι, καὶ ἔνδοθεν τό τε νοητὸν τήν τε νόησιν ἔχουσιν, ὅτι ὁ νοῦς ἔνδον, ὅς ἐστιν αὐτὰ τὰ πρῶτα, συνὼν αὐτῷ ἀεὶ καὶ ἐνέργεια ὑπάρχων καὶ οὐκ ἐπιβάλλων ὡς οὐκ ἔχων ἢ ἐπικτώμενος ἢ διεξοδεύων οὐ προκεχειρισμένα· ψυχῆς γὰρ ταῦτα πάθη· ἀλλ' ἔστηκεν ἐν αὐτῷ ὁμοῦ πάντα ὤν, οὐ νοήσας ἵν' ὑποστήσῃ ἕκαστα. Cf. also iv. 3, § 18 (385).

tion. The cause and justification of the soul's pursuit of knowledge can only be found in the fact that truth exists. Did it not exist she would not and could not discover it. As guarantee, then, of the relevancy of her thinking, there must exist a higher principle in which the ideal object of her thought finds expression. This is Mind or νοῦς, contemplative Reason intuitive of truth.

Such is the road by which Plotinus reaches the world of Platonic Ideas. Once there we find them little changed since Plato's time. In them the confused variety of the sensible world is reduced to order and rationality in a harmoniously interrelated system of universals. This system forms a κόσμος νοητός, an intelligible universe, in which as the Reality underlying the phenomenal order, the demand of reason for unity and consistency finds a final satisfaction.

Not only, however, does reason require that its ultimate object shall be self-consistent, but that it shall be apprehended without the mediation of discursive thought. Reasoning *about* or *towards* it is of value only as leading to a final and sufficient state of contemplation of it. Our higher principle must also satisfy this craving for immediate union of subject with object. This Plotinus accomplishes by a doctrine reminiscent of the Aristotelian teaching of the identity of the intellect and the intelligible. The world of Platonic Ideas becomes to all intents and purposes the Aristotelian God; that is, an

absolute Reason such as it is the aim of every finite reason to become, whose single immutable act of thought once and for all determines and embodies truth. Such a Reason would think the rational constitution of the world; but that constitution would be no other than its own self. For the essence of reason is to think truth. The content of its thought, that is, from itself, is truth. Apart from the truth which it thinks it is as empty and narrow as consciousness without content. "Unless thought be something added to its essence, all that it thinks, it thinks from itself; all that it has, it has from itself. But if it thinks from and out of itself, it is itself the object of its thought."[1] That is, self-realized reason thinks itself as an intelligible order in experience; it will think itself as such, because such are the categories imposed upon it by its own nature. As reason means in any finite experience merely the existence of an intelligible structure therein, so we might say that the Aristotelian God and the νοῦς of Plotinus are but the expression of the fact that the completely intelligible (*i.e.* the truth towards which the finite mind aspires) exists, and contains within itself the conditions of its own existence. "In Mind," exclaims Plotinus, "are all things immortal, every mind, every god, every soul, eternally. Eternally, I

[1] v. 9, § 5 (558 A) [vol. ii. p. 252, ll. 4-7]. *εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐπακτὸν τὸ φρονεῖν ἔχει, εἴ τι νοεῖ, παρ' αὑτοῦ νοεῖ, καὶ εἴ τι ἔχει, παρ' αὑτοῦ ἔχει. εἰ δὲ παρ' αὑτοῦ καὶ ἐξ αὑτοῦ νοεῖ, αὐτός ἐστιν ἃ νοεῖ.*

say, for why should it in its happy state seek change? And into what could it change, seeing that it has all things of its own self? Nay more, being perfect, it seeks to be no greater. Hence all things which share in its existence are perfect, to the end that it may be perfect in every respect, possessed of nothing which is not so, and of nothing which is not the object of its thought.

"But it thinks as one not in search, but in possession. Nor is its blessedness acquired from without; rather is Mind eternally all things, the true eternity of which time encircling the soul is an image—time which leaves the old things behind and lays hold of new. For now one thing, now another revolves about the soul, now Socrates, now a horse, always some single thing. Mind, on the other hand, is all things. It contains all things at rest within itself; it alone has real existence; for it the present is eternal, and there is nothing future, since the future is already present to it; nor is there anything that is past. Nothing, I say, is past, but in that they truly exist all things remain at rest in it from eternity as though content with themselves as they are. Each of them is Mind and real existence, and the sum of them is all Mind and all real existence."[1]

[1] v. 1, § 4 (485 A) [vol. ii. p. 165, l. 20 *et seq.*]. *πάντα γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ τὰ ἀθάνατα περιέχει, νοῦν πάντα, θεὸν πάντα, ψυχὴν πᾶσαν, ἑστῶτα ἀεί. τί γὰρ ζητεῖ μεταβάλλειν εὖ ἔχων; ποῖ δὲ μετελθεῖν πάντα παρ' αὑτῷ ἔχων; ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὔξην ζητεῖ τελειότατος ὤν. διὸ καὶ τὰ παρ' αὐτῷ πάντα τέλεια, ἵνα πάντη ᾖ τέλειος οὐδὲν ἔχων ὅ τι*

We have now reached the limit of the unity that can be introduced into experience by reason, that is, the perfect coherence of all its parts immediately and synoptically perceived. But the logical unity of a self-consistent system grasped "all together," as it were, in a single "eternal" movement or act of thought, with which the demands of reason would be satisfied, proves insufficient to pacify the mystic spirit. He demands an object distilled clear of all variety and multiplicity, a subject which is conscious of nothing but such an object. On the level of reason there are still many universals, however harmoniously they may cohere, and logically imply one another's existence, and a duality of subject and object in thought's reflection upon its own thinking.

So it is that we find Plotinus rejecting the suggestion that νοῦς can be regarded as the first principle. "Why," he asks, "is Mind not the creator? Because," he replies, "the activity of Mind is thought, and thought, beholding the intelligible and turning towards it and deriving, as

μὴ τοιοῦτον, οὐδὲν [δ'] ἔχων ἐν αὐτῷ ὃ μὴ νοεῖ· νοεῖ δὲ οὐ ζητῶν, ἀλλ' ἔχων. καὶ τὸ μακάριον αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐπίκτητον, ἀλλ' ἐν αἰῶνι πάντα, καὶ ὁ ὄντως αἰών, ὃν μιμεῖται χρόνος περιθέων ψυχὴν τὰ μὲν παριείς, τοῖς δὲ ἐπιβάλλων. καὶ γὰρ ἄλλα καὶ ἄλλα αὖ περὶ ψυχήν· ποτὲ γὰρ Σωκράτης, ποτὲ δὲ ἵππος ἔν τι ἀεὶ τῶν ὄντων· ὁ δὲ νοῦς πάντα. ἔχει οὖν ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα ἑστῶτα ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, καὶ ἔστι μόνον, καὶ τὸ ἔστιν ἀεί, καὶ οὐδαμοῦ τὸ μέλλον· ἔστι γὰρ καὶ τύτε· οὐδὲ τὸ παρεληλυθός· οὐ γάρ τι ἐκεῖ παρελήλυθεν, ἀλλ' ἐνέστηκεν ἀεὶ ἅτε τὰ αὐτὰ ὄντα οἷον ἀγαπῶντα ἑαυτὰ οὕτως ἔχοντα. ἕκαστον δὲ αὐτῶν νοῦς καὶ ὄν ἐστι καὶ τὸ σύμπαν πᾶς νοῦς καὶ πᾶν ὄν.

it were, its fulfilment from it, is indeterminate in itself, even as sight is, but is determined by the intelligible. . . . Hence it is not simple, but plural, displaying a composite though intelligible nature, and beholding many things."[1]

The first principle, however, must be "simple and different from anything that comes after it. It must be absolute, and pure from the things that proceed from it, and yet at the same time capable of being present in things in some other way. It must also be essentially one,—that is, it must not be primarily something else and one only secondarily. . . . For were it not simple, free from all arrangement and composition, and essentially one, it would not be a first principle. Moreover, because it is simple, it is self-sufficient, and the first of all things. For what is not first stands in need of what is prior to it, and what is not simple stands in need of the simple factors within it, so that it may be composed of them."[2] It is evident that our

[1] v. 4, § 2 (517) [vol. ii. p. 204, l. 8 *et seq.*]. *διὰ τί δὲ οὐ νοῦς; ὅτι νοῦ ἐνέργειά ἐστι νόησις· νόησις δὲ τὸ νοητὸν ὁρῶσα καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο ἐπιστραφεῖσα καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνου οἷον ἀποτελειουμένη ἀόριστος μὲν αὐτὴ ὥσπερ ὄψις, ὁριζομένη δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ. διὸ καὶ εἴρηται ἐκ τῆς ἀορίστου δυάδος καὶ τοῦ ἑνὸς τὰ εἴδη καὶ οἱ ἀριθμοί· τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ νοῦς. διὸ οὐχ ἁπλοῦς, ἀλλὰ πολλά, σύνθεσίν τε ἐμφαίνων, νοητὴν μέντοι, καὶ πολλὰ ὁρῶν ἤδη.* Cf. v. 6 *passim*.

[2] v. 4, § 1 (516) [vol. ii. p. 202, l. 23 *et seq.*]. *δεῖ μὲν γάρ τι πρὸ πάντων εἶναι ἁπλοῦν τοῦτο καὶ πάντων ἕτερον τῶν μετ' αὐτό, ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ὄν, οὐ μεμιγμένον τοῖς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάλιν ἕτερον τρόπον τοῖς ἄλλοις παρεῖναι δυνάμενον, ὂν ὄντως ἕν, οὐχ ἕτερον ὄν, εἶτα ἕν, καθ' οὗ ψεῦδος καὶ τὸ ἓν εἶναι, οὗ μὴ λόγος μηδὲ ἐπιστήμη, ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐπέκεινα λέγεται εἶναι οὐσίας—εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἁπλοῦν ἔσται συμβάσεως ἔξω πάσης καὶ συνθέσεως καὶ ὄντως ἕν, οὐκ ἂν ἀρχὴ εἴη—αὐταρκέ-*

experience can furnish no predicate or category suitable to the description of such a principle, or hint of the character of the state of consciousness which can be aware of it. We may appeal to experience only for examples of what it is not, rejecting each new suggestion as irrelevant.[1] It is "not a thing, but prior to everything," for inasmuch as "it brings all things into being, it cannot be one of them." It is "of no quality or quantity; it is not mind or soul, in motion or at rest, in space or in time"; but it is the absolutely uniform, or rather the absolutely formless, since it is prior to all form, prior to motion, prior to rest. The term "Being" is also inapplicable to it, since "Being has, as it were, the form of Being."[2] That is, Being is

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στατόν τε τῷ ἁπλοῦν εἶναι καὶ πρῶτον ἁπάντων· τὸ γὰρ μὴ πρῶτον ἐνδεὲς τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ, τό τε μὴ ἁπλοῦν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ἁπλῶν δεόμενον, ἵν' ᾖ ἐξ ἐκείνων.

[1] v. 3, § 14 (511) [vol. ii. p. 197, l. 19]. *καὶ γὰρ λέγομεν, ὃ μή ἐστιν· ὃ δέ ἐστιν, οὐ λέγομεν.*

[2] All the above quotations are from vi. 9, § 3 (760) [vol. ii. p. 512]. *οὐδὲ νοῦς τοίνυν, ἀλλὰ πρὸ νοῦ· τί γὰρ τῶν ὄντων ἐστὶν ὁ νοῦς· ἐκεῖνο δὲ οὔ τι, ἀλλὰ πρὸ ἑκάστου, οὐδὲ ὄν· καὶ γὰρ τὸ ὂν οἷον μορφὴν τὴν τοῦ ὄντος ἔχει, ἄμορφον δὲ ἐκεῖνο καὶ μορφῆς νοητῆς. γεννητικὴ γὰρ ἡ τοῦ ἑνὸς φύσις οὖσα τῶν πάντων οὐδέν ἐστιν αὐτῶν. οὔτε οὖν τί οὔτε ποιὸν οὔτε ποσὸν οὔτε νοῦς οὔτε ψυχή· οὐδὲ κινούμενον οὐδ' αὖ ἑστώς, οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ, οὐκ ἐν χρόνῳ, ἀλλὰ τὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μονοειδές, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀνείδεον πρὸ εἴδους ὂν παντός, πρὸ κινήσεως, πρὸ στάσεως· ταῦτα γὰρ περὶ τὸ ὄν, ἃ πολλὰ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ. διὰ τί οὖν, εἰ μὴ κινούμενον, οὐχ ἑστώς; ὅτι περὶ μὲν τὸ ὂν τούτων θάτερον ἢ ἀμφότερα ἀνάγκη τό τε ἑστὼς στάσει ἑστὼς καὶ οὐ ταὐτὸν τῇ στάσει· ὥστε συμβήσεται αὐτῷ καὶ οὐκέτι ἁπλοῦν μένει. ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ αἴτιον λέγειν οὐ κατηγορεῖν ἐστι συμβεβηκός τι αὐτῷ, ἀλλ' ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἔχομέν τι παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου ὄντος ἐν αὐτῷ. δεῖ δὲ μηδὲ τὸ ἐκεῖνο, μηδὲ τὸ τοῦτο λέγειν ἀκριβῶς λέγοντα, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς οἷον ἔξωθεν περιθέοντας τὰ*

something, and even in its greatest abstraction still displays a duality of subject and predicate. Nor can we properly say of the One that it is good. At least, goodness does not pertain to it as a predicate, for then the Good would be independent of it, and it would be dependent on the Good for its goodness. If anything, it is not good, but *the* Good itself, or better still it is super-good, a good not in relation to itself, which is in need of nothing, but *the* Good in relation to other things which derive their goodness from it, as far as they are able.[1] Beautiful, also, it is not, "for all beauty is subsequent to it, and derived from it, as all daylight is from the sun."[2] Again, it cannot be said to think, because thinking is a process involving a distinction between subject and object, and in the One there is no such distinction. The One is not self-conscious.[3] Moreover, if it thinks, ignorance will be prior to thought, and thought will be for it, as it were, a means of knowing itself. But it is absolutely self-sufficient, is in closer and surer possession of itself than any thought could put it.[4] However, we must not suppose that because it cannot be said to know itself, it is therefore ignorant of itself. It tran-

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αὐτῶν ἑρμηνεύειν ἐθέλειν πάθη ὁτὲ μὲν ἐγγύς, ὁτὲ δὲ ἀποπίπτοντας ταῖς περὶ αὐτὸ ἀπορίαις.

[1] vi. 9, § 6 (764) [vol. ii. pp. 516-517]. Cf. v. 3, § 11 (508).

[2] vi. 9, § 4 (761). *πᾶν γὰρ καλὸν ὕστερον ἐκείνου καὶ παρ' ἐκείνου ὥσπερ πᾶν φῶς μεθημερινὸν παρ' ἡλίου.*

[3] v. 3, § 13 (511) [vol. ii. pp. 196-197]. Cf. iii. 9, § 9 (358-359).

[4] v. 6, § 4 (536) [vol. ii. p. 225].

scends altogether the distinction between ignorance and knowledge. Ignorance implies a duality of subject and object. One thing is ignorant of another. I am ignorant of myself. But that in which there is no duality—which is absolutely alone —can neither know nor be ignorant.[1]

Even the term "One" we must use with careful reservations. The first principle is not one as "this one," or "that one."[2] It is not one in a mathematical sense, *i.e.* one as the first of a series, or as the monad and point are the one reached by division of the many.[3] It is not one in any sense in which oneness can be predicated of anything else, nor is its oneness a predicate of itself. It is not something else primarily, and only secondarily one.[4] In a word, it is only in a negative sense as a denial of plurality, and by analogy, that we apply the term.[5]

The state of consciousness in which we are aware of the One is correspondingly ineffable. We can have no idea of it except by experiencing it ourselves. It is beyond words written or spoken. "We speak and write of it, however, that we may send our spirits towards it, and rouse them from the contemplation of mere concepts to the vision of it, as we might show a man the way to something

[1] vi. 9, § 6 (765 A) [vol. ii. p. 516].
[2] vi. 9, § 3 (761 A) [vol. ii. p. 512].
[3] vi. 9, § 5 (763) [vol. ii. p. 515].
[4] vi. 9, § 5 (763) [vol. ii. pp. 514-515].
[5] vi. 9, § 5 (763) [vol. ii. pp. 514-515]. Cf. v. 3, § 13 (510).

he was eager to see."[1] To reach the state of ecstasy, the soul must become concentrated and receptive. She must be far more formless even than Matter, "if there is to be nothing within her to hinder her from being filled and illumined with the primal nature. She must free herself from all outer things, and turn to what is altogether within. She must have no inclination towards, nay no knowledge of, outer things. Rather must she pass beyond consciousness of them all, first with respect to her own condition, and then with respect to the intelligible existences. She must lose consciousness, too, of herself, and attain to the vision of God, and become one with him."[2] This vision and he who has it are as far beyond the rational level of consciousness as is God beyond Truth and Being. Consciousness has become absolutely simple. One can indeed scarcely talk longer of a "vision" or of "seeing." For seeing involves a duality of seer and seen; whereas in communion with God there is no

[1] vi. 9, § 4 (761) [vol. ii. p. 513, ll. 2-8]. *διὸ οὐδὲ ῥητὸν οὐδὲ γραπτόν φησιν. ἀλλὰ λέγομεν καὶ γράφομεν πέμποντες εἰς αὐτὸ καὶ ἀνεγείροντες ἐκ τῶν λόγων ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν ὥσπερ ὁδὸν δεικνύντες τῷ τι θεάσασθαι βουλομένῳ.* Cf. v. 5, § 4 (522) *et seq.*

[2] vi. 9, § 7 (765) [vol. ii. p. 578, ll. 4-14]. *ἀλλ' ὥσπερ περὶ τῆς ὕλης λέγεται, ὡς ἄρα ἄποιον εἶναι δεῖ πάντων, εἰ μέλλει δέχεσθαι τοὺς πάντων τύπους, οὕτω καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀνείδεον τὴν ψυχὴν γίνεσθαι, εἰ μέλλει μηδὲν ἐμπόδιον ἐγκαθήμενον ἔσεσθαι πρὸς πλήρωσιν καὶ ἔλλαμψιν αὐτῇ τῆς φύσεως τῆς πρώτης. εἰ τοῦτο, πάντων τῶν ἔξω ἀφέμενον δεῖ ἐπιστραφῆναι πρὸς τὸ εἴσω πάντη, μὴ πρός τι τῶν ἔξω κεκλίσθαι, ἀλλὰ ἀγνοήσαντα τὰ πάντα καὶ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν τῇ διαθέσει, τότε δὲ καὶ τοῖς εἴδεσιν, ἀγνοήσαντα δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ θέᾳ ἐκείνου γενέσθαι κἀκείνῳ συγγενόμενον καὶ ἱκανῶς οἷον ὁμιλήσαντα ἥκειν ἀγγέλλοντα, εἰ δύναιτο, καὶ ἄλλῳ τὴν ἐκεῖ συνουσίαν.*

distinction between seer and seen. "It is a bold thing to say, but in the vision a man neither sees, nor if he sees distinguishes what he sees from himself, nor fancies that there are two. On the contrary it is by becoming, as it were, another than himself, and by neither being himself nor belonging to himself, that he attains to the vision. And, having once reached it, he is one with it, as having made the centres of two circles to coincide. For the centres when they coincide become one, and when the circles are separated there are two centres again. . . . Now since in the vision there were not two, but the seer was made one with the seen, and this not as with something merely seen, but as with something actually made one with himself, a man who had been united with God might, if he remembered, have in him some image of the divine. He himself was One, with no distinctions within himself, with respect either to himself or other things. There was no movement within him, no desire, no passion . . . not even any reason or thought. Nay, himself was not even present to himself, if one may speak thus. Rather, as one rapt and entranced, he attained to perfect calm and motionless solitude in his own being, neither falling away on any side, nor turning about himself; but, wholly at rest, he was as though he had become immutability itself. Nor had he a thought for beauty, for he had passed beyond the Beautiful, even beyond the band of virtues. . . . Perhaps then it was not vision but

some other kind of seeing, ecstasy and simplification and self-surrender. . . ."[1]

In fine, the mind's search for the Godhead must meet at every point with the baffling answer given by the sage Yâjanavlkya in the Hindoo story. In all attempts to define Brahma, *Neti, neti*, "It is not thus," is the reply which meets each new effort. The Plotinian God is in the mystic's phrase the "silence"; the final stillness beyond all the sound

[1] vi. 9, §§ 10-11 (769 c–770 ε) [vol. ii. p. 522, l. 31–p. 524, l. 4]. *τὸ δὲ ὀφθέν, εἴπερ δεῖ δύο ταῦτα λέγειν, τό τε ὁρῶν καὶ τὸ ὁρώμενον, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἓν ἄμφω—τολμηρὸς μὲν ὁ λόγος—τότε μὲν οὔτε ὁρᾷ οὔτε διακρίνει ὁ ὁρῶν οὐδὲ φαντάζεται δύο, ἀλλ' οἷον ἄλλος γενόμενος καὶ οὐκ αὐτὸς οὐδ' αὐτοῦ συντελεῖ ἐκεῖ, κἀκείνου γενόμενος ἓν ἐστιν ὥσπερ κέντρῳ κέντρον συνάψας· καὶ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα συνελθόντα ἓν ἐστι, τότε [δὲ] δύο, ὅταν χωρίς. οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς νῦν λέγομεν ἕτερον. διὸ καὶ δύσφραστον τὸ θέαμα. πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἀπαγγείλειέ τις ὡς ἕτερον οὐκ ἰδὼν ἐκεῖνο, ὅτε ἐθεᾶτο ἕτερον, ἀλλὰ ἓν πρὸς ἑαυτόν;* 11. *τοῦτο δὴ ἐθέλον δηλοῦν τὸ τῶν μυστηρίων τῶνδε ἐπίταγμα, τὸ μὴ ἐκφέρειν εἰς μὴ μεμυημένους, ὡς οὐκ ἔκφορον ἐκεῖνο ὃν ἀπεῖπε δηλοῦν πρὸς ἄλλον τὸ θεῖον, ὅτῳ μὴ καὶ αὐτῷ ἰδεῖν εὐτύχηται. ἐπεὶ τοίνυν δύο οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' ἓν ἦν αὐτὸς ὁ ἰδὼν πρὸς τὸ ἑωραμένον, ὡς ἂν μὴ ἑωραμένον, ἀλλ' ἠνωμένον, ὃς ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐκείνῳ ἐμίγνυτο εἰ μεμνῷτο, ἔχοι ἂν παρ' ἑαυτῷ ἐκείνου εἰκόνα. ἦν δὲ ἓν καὶ αὐτὸς διαφορὰν ἐν αὑτῷ οὐδεμίαν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἔχων οὔτε κατὰ ἄλλα· οὐ γάρ τι ἐκινεῖτο παρ' αὐτῷ, οὐ θυμός, οὐκ ἐπιθυμία ἄλλου παρὴν αὐτῷ ἀναβεβηκότι, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ λόγος οὐδέ τις νόησις οὐδ' ὅλως αὐτός, εἰ δεῖ καὶ τοῦτο λέγειν· ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἁρπασθεὶς ἢ ἐνθουσιάσας ἡσυχῇ ἐν ἐρήμῳ καταστάσει γεγένηται ἀτρεμεῖ τῇ αὐτοῦ οὐσίᾳ οὐδαμοῦ ἀποκλίνων οὐδὲ περὶ αὐτὸν στρεφόμενος, ἑστὼς πάντη καὶ οἷον στάσις γενόμενος· οὐδὲ τῶν καλῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἤδη ὑπερθέων, ὑπερβὰς ἤδη καὶ τὸν τῶν ἀρετῶν χορόν, ὥσπερ τις εἰς τὸ εἴσω τοῦ ἀδύτου εἰσδὺς εἰς τοὐπίσω καταλιπὼν τὰ ἐν τῷ ναῷ ἀγάλματα, ἃ ἐξελθόντι τοῦ ἀδύτου πάλιν γίνεται πρῶτα μετὰ τὸ ἔνδον θέαμα καὶ τὴν ἐκεῖ συνουσίαν πρὸς οὐκ ἄγαλμα οὐδ' εἰκόνα, ἀλλ' αὐτό· ἃ δὴ γίνεται δεύτερα θεάματα. τὸ δὲ ἴσως ἦν οὐ θέαμα, ἀλλὰ ἄλλος τρόπος τοῦ ἰδεῖν, ἔκστασις καὶ ἄπλωσις καὶ ἐπίδοσις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔφεσις πρὸς ἀφὴν καὶ στάσις καὶ περινόησις πρὸς ἐφαρμογήν, εἴπερ τις τὸ ἐν τῷ ἀδύτῳ θεάσεται.*

and fury of the world of particular things. But the silence and stillness are positive, are more than absence of noise and change, though we are able only to describe them as such. In spite of the absolute irrelevance of all finite standards of perfection and reality to the divine essence, and the complete annihilation of everything finite, determinate, and intelligible, which experience of it would involve, that essence is so absolutely real and perfect, and the vision of it so final and satisfactory, that though from our point of view they are ineffable except in negative terms, to him who had attained them, "our so real world with all its stars and milky ways is likewise nothing."

CHAPTER II

METAPHYSICAL EVIL

For the ordinary mystic the natural corollary of such a proposition concerning the nature of God is an out-and-out doctrine of metaphysical evil. And since the mere fact of a world at all as separate and individual, as itself and not God, is *prima facie* evil, the problem of Evil becomes the problem of existence. The question is not, how comes it that the world is imperfect? but how comes it, given our premises, that there is a world? The nature of the divine perfection would seem logically to preclude any divine causation or creation at all. In a system such as Schopenhauer's, for example, it is hard to see how the Will denied can properly be said to be the cause of the Will affirmed. Or again, I think one may fairly question whether in the Vedanta doctrine, the Âtman in its true self-hood which is identical with Brahma, can be made more than the nominal cause of the illusion of the finite world by which it is haunted. Reality is not the creator of its own obscuration. The veil of Maya materializes, as it were, from without.

The result in most such systems is that, so far as the point is raised at all, the origin of the world is left unexplained. All that we can say is that it just happens, or comes, or grows, and let the matter rest at that, ignoring the dualism latent in the question. I can give no better example of this inconclusiveness than a passage from a modern mystic, a disciple of Schopenhauer, descriptive of the origin of the universe.

"Now there was formed," he says "not at any time but before all eternity, to-day and for ever, like an inexplicable clouding of the clearness of the heavens, in the pure, painless, and will-less bliss of denial, a morbid propensity, a sinful bent: the affirmation of the will to life. In it and with it is given the myriad host of all the sins and woes of which this immeasurable world is the revealer." [1]

But even if we admit, as Deussen does, that the origin of the finite is inexplicable, we are by no means clear of dualism. We may not know where the finite comes from, but the finite in its finitude still remains something essentially different from the infinite which it clouds and obscures. It is simply *there*, a datum or condition of experience which is confessedly irreducible to the real, over whose surface it is spread like a veil.

Again, admitting, as does Philo, an explicit dualism, and attributing the existence of the finite to a principle of finitude over against God, the

[1] Deussen, *Elements of Metaphysics*, § 171.

mystic has still to face a difficulty. For him, the universe is a disease from which Reality suffers. The eternal silence of the divine is broken from without into the moments of our noisy years. The whole process of creation, as we usually conceive it, is reversed. The principle of finitude and imperfection becomes the active agent, the infinite and the perfect, the passive substratum. Instead of God ordering Matter, Matter, as it were, disorders God.

Philo overcomes this difficulty by practically accepting the inversion of the ordinary point of view. God orders Matter, to be sure, but it is the existence of Matter which rouses him to activity. Confronted from all eternity with what is not himself, he does what he can to overcome the discrepancy. His perfection in relation to this "Other" becomes active and bounteous good. Out of the unbroken peace of his supreme isolation and ineffableness, he issues literally another being, a Logos—an ideal world, an active, creative, sustaining and providential power. But this aspect of godhead, derivative and subordinate as it is, represents not a natural and essential, but an accidental expression of the divine nature; a part, if you will, forced on it from without by the unhappy exigencies of the situation. Were there no Matter there would be no Logos, no Providence, no world; nothing but the perfect and unbroken peace.[1]

Plotinus, however, must deal with these difficulties

[1] Cf. p. 38, note 2.

in another way. The intention of his system is from beginning to end monistic. His task then involves the defence of a double thesis. Against Philo and the majority of mystics, he must argue how God, from no secondary consideration, such as a material principle, or by no inexplicable clouding of his deity, but of himself, by all the exigencies and out of the depths of his essential perfection was bound to create a world. That is, he must show how God naturally *would* generate the universe. And against the non-mystic dualist like Aristotle he must demonstrate how he *could*; how God can be not only the final, but the true efficient and material cause of everything that is.

The key to the first question he believes himself to have found in the explanation of Timaeus to Socrates. Ἀγαθὸς ἦν ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος. "God was good, and in the good there can never arise jealousy of anything."[1] "How, then," he goes on in continuance of an argument for the simplicity of the One, already quoted, "how, then, do things proceed from the first principle? If the primal be perfect, and the most perfect of all things, and its power be fundamental, it must be the most powerful of all things that are, and other powers must imitate it as far as they can. Now, whenever anything comes to perfection we see that it procreates, that it cannot endure to remain as it is by itself, and so creates

[1] Plato, *Timaeus*, 29 E.

another being. This is true not only of things which possess conscious purpose, but also of things which procreate without conscious purpose. Indeed, even inanimate objects throw off some part of themselves as far as they are able. Thus fire warms and snow chills, and drugs have their appropriate effects upon other things, and all things imitate, as far as they can, the first principles whence they came; for thus they strive after eternal life and goodness. How then should the most perfect and primal Good stay shut up within itself as though grudging of itself or impotent, itself the potentiality of all things? How could it then be the first principle? Something then must be begotten of it if any of the other existences which are derived from it are to exist. . . ."[1]

The creation of the world is due then to the active nature of perfection. The Good is superabundant, overflows,[2] and must overflow till every

[1] v. 4, § 1 (517) [vol. ii. p. 203, l. 15 *et seq.*]. Cf. iv. 8, § 6, v. 1, § 6 (487) [vol. ii. p. 168, l. 30 *et seq.*]. πῶς οὖν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου· εἰ τέλεόν ἐστι τὸ πρῶτον, καὶ πάντων τελεώτατον, καὶ δύναμις ἡ πρώτη, δεῖ πάντων τῶν ὄντων δυνατώτατον εἶναι, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας δυνάμεις, καθ' ὅσον δύνανται μιμεῖσθαι ἐκεῖνο, ὅτι δ' ἂν τῶν ἄλλων εἰς τελείωσιν ἴῃ, ὁρῶμεν γεννῶν καὶ οὐκ ἀνεχόμενον ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ μένειν, ἀλλ' ἕτερον ποιοῦν οὐ μόνον ὅ, τι ἂν προαίρεσιν ἔχῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσα φύει ἄνευ προαιρέσεως, καὶ τὰ ἄψυχα δὲ μεταδίδοντα ἑαυτῶν, καθ' ὅσον δύναται. οἷον τὸ πῦρ θερμαίνει, καὶ ψύχει ἡ χιών. καὶ τὰ φάρμακα δὲ εἰς ἄλλο ἐργάζεται, οἷον αὐτά, πάντα τὴν ἄρχην κατὰ δύναμιν ἀπομιμούμενα, εἰς ἀϊδιότητά τε καὶ ἀγαθότητα. πῶς οὖν τὸ τελεώτατον καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαθὸν ἐν αὑτῷ σταίη, ὥσπερ φθονῆσαν ἑαυτοῦ ἢ ἀδυνατῆσαν, ἡ πάντων δύναμις; πῶς δ' ἂν ἔτι ἀρχὴ εἴη; δεῖ δή τι καὶ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι, εἴπερ ἔσται τι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων παρ' αὐτοῦ γε ὑποστάντων. [2] v. 2, § 1 (494) [vol. ii. p. 176].

possibility of good and every possible kind of perfection is realized.[1] To this point of the grades of perfection we shall return later. At present we must point out that it is necessary to exclude carefully any idea of conscious purpose from the creative process. God does not will the world into being, it does not exist in response to any aim or purpose of his. He does not even know that it exists. For him, as for the mystic spirit in its moment of final victory, the universe "with all its suns and milky ways is nothing." Did he will to create it, and were he conscious of it, he would be no longer either *the* One or *the* Good. He would be, and here Plotinus agrees with Aristotle, a moved mover. The term "generation," indeed, is hardly apposite, and Plotinus employs it with the warning that we must rid it of all suggestion of generation in time. What is generated by the One is generated without movement of the One. And "since the One remains unmoved, if there be anything that comes after it, this second existence must come into being without any assent, or will, or motion of any sort on the part of the One. How, then, is this accomplished, and what are we to think of that process which goes on about the abiding One? We are to think of it as a radiance proceeding indeed from the One, but from the One abiding therein unchanged, just as the bright light which courses round the sun is perpetually generated from it,

[1] iv. 8, § 6 (474) [vol. ii. p. 150].

though the sun itself changes not at all. Indeed, all things that exist necessarily give out from their own essence, while they last, a property attached to themselves, which proceeds from their potentiality within, and spreads about them to that which is outside — an image, as it were, of the archetypes from which it sprang. Fire dispenses heat from itself, and snow does not merely retain its cold within itself. But the best evidences of this are sweet-smelling substances. For as long as they exist there is something which proceeds out of and spreads round about them, and everything that is near at hand shares in the enjoyment of these derived existences."[1]

The above passage is of great importance, not only as regards our own problem, but for the understanding of the *Leitmotiv* of the whole Plotinian system. It contains what we may call the analogy of emanation, an analogy to which Plotinus appeals again and again, now in one, now in another connection. The figure, indeed, lies at the basis of his whole

[1] v. 1, § 6 (487) [vol. ii. p. 168, l. 15 *et seq.*]. δεῖ οὖν ἀκινήτου ὄντος, εἴ τι δεύτερον μετ' αὐτό, οὐ προσνεύσαντος οὐδὲ βουληθέντος οὐδὲ ὅλως κινηθέντος ὑποστῆναι αὐτό. πῶς οὖν; καὶ τί δεῖ νοῆσαι περὶ ἐκεῖνο μένον; περίλαμψιν ἐξ αὐτοῦ μέν, ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ μένοντος, οἷον ἡλίου τὸ περὶ αὐτὸν λαμπρὸν φῶς περιθέον, ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀεὶ γεννώμενον μένοντος. καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα ἕως μένει ἐκ τῆς αὐτῶν οὐσίας ἀναγκαίαν τὴν περὶ αὐτὰ πρὸς τὸ ἔξω αὐτῶν ἐκ τῆς παρούσης δυνάμεως δίδωσιν αὐτῶν ἐξηρτημένην ὑπόστασιν, εἰκόνα οὖσαν οἷον ἀρχετύπων ὧν ἐξέφυ, πῦρ μὲν τὴν παρ' αὐτοῦ θερμότητα· καὶ χιὼν οὐκ εἶσω μόνον τὸ ψυχρὸν κατέχει· μάλιστα δὲ ὅσα εὐώδη μαρτυρεῖ τούτῳ· ἕως γὰρ ἔστι, πρόεισί τι ἐξ αὐτῶν περὶ αὐτά, ὧν ἀπολαύει ὑποστάντων ὅ τι πλησίον.

system. Upon it, and with constant reference to it, is built up the imposing edifice of the theory of emanation which is the essence of the Plotinian metaphysics. We are, indeed, dealing here with one of the great analogies of philosophy. Were one writing a book on the philosophic significance and use of similes, I am not sure but that one would have to count this first, both in point of its aptness, and of its central place and controlling function in thought. Certainly there is none in the history of Greek philosophy that can compare with it in its magnificence and its attraction, unless it be the κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον of Aristotle, which by likening God's relation to the world to that of the beloved to the lover, solved so many riddles to the Stagirite's satisfaction. And there is none equal to it in downright cleverness, except perhaps that *tour de force* in the *Timaeus*, where Plato by laying out empty space geometrically and then combining the plane figures into solids, succeeded in educing a solid world out of sheer emptiness. Perhaps, too, there is none more false, and, because of its dominance, more mischievous in its falsity. To the point of its falsity we shall have occasion to return later. Suffice it to say for the present that by his employment of it Plotinus believes that he has overcome the principal, or at least the preliminary, difficulty in the way of deriving the Many from the One; the problem of preserving the integrity and absolute character

of the One in spite of and in the midst of the process.

Granted, however, that there has been established the possibility of an emanation from the One without any disturbance or diminution of its essence, there yet remain two questions to be answered. In the first place we may ask how the emanation is to be logically distinguished from the essence of the One, since the emanation can only be an emanation of the essence; in the second place how the emanation, in itself homogeneous, can of and by itself become diversified.

The first difficulty Plotinus answers by distinguishing two kinds of "acts" or "operations" (*ἐνέργειαι*). There is indeed the Aristotelian "act," the operation of being what one is; but there is also another sort of "act," the expression, as it were, of one's self in another. Or to put it biologically, we might say there is an "act" of reproduction of one's self as well as the "act" of self-preservation. Plotinus harks back to his favourite simile for an example. "Take fire for example," he says. "There we find both the heat which constitutes its essence, and the heat which emanates from it while it is engaged in the activity natural to its essence, that is, in continuing to be fire."[1] That is, heat is *in* the fire, is the essence and

[1] v. 4, § 2 (518) [vol. ii. p. 205, ll. 8-11]. *οἷον καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρὸς ἡ μέν τίς ἐστι συμπληροῦσα τὴν οὐσίαν θερμότης, ἡ δὲ ἀπ' ἐκείνης ἤδη γινομένη ἐνεργοῦντος ἐκείνου τὴν σύμφυτον τῇ οὐσίᾳ [ἐνέργειαν] ἐν τῷ μένειν πῦρ. οὕτω δὴ κἀκεῖ.* Cf. v. 3, § 7 (503); § 15 (512).

"operation" of fire, and at the same time goes forth from it. We perhaps might turn to Christian theology, and point to that eternal generation of the Son by the Father, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God," in which the Father, preserving none the less the essential "operation" of his proper hypostasis, engenders the hypostasis of the Son.

By thus reverting to its fundamental analogy, the Plotinian analogy meets the second difficulty connected with the derivation of the Many from the One. But there is yet the third to be reckoned with. How can the Many be conceived as developing within the perfect simplicity of the primitive emanation? How can the absolutely homogeneous be the cause and substance of its own variegation? In dealing with this crucial point Plotinus is not unnaturally hesitant and obscure, and we can be no more than tentative in our interpretation. But Plotinus's meaning, it seems, is somewhat as follows: The One is indeed nothing, *i.e.* no thing, since it transcends all things, but, as the existence of existence proves, it contains within itself the possibility of all things. In it "all things are not as yet, but shall be,"[1] not indeed in point of time, since the generation of the world is eternal, but in point of logical priority. From this point of view,

[1] v. 2, § 1 (494) [vol. ii. p. 176, l. 3]. Τὸ ἓν πάντα καὶ οὐδὲ ἕν· ἀρχὴ γὰρ πάντων οὐ πάντα ἀλλ' ἐκείνης πάντα· ἐκεῖ γὰρ οἷον ἀνέδραμε· μᾶλλον δὲ οὔπω ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ἔσται.

as itself the possibility of a rational universe, the One may be called latently rational or intelligible. Now the emanation from the One at the moment of its issue from the One (remembering that we employ temporal terms only by way of imperfect analogy), is as yet undetermined. But at the moment of its issue, which is also the moment of its separation, the fact of its separation enables it and causes it, as something different from the One, to turn to the One and regard it. In other words, the One emerges from its transcendence of the distinction between subject and object, and becomes self-conscious.

But what is this self of which it is conscious? It cannot *know itself* as One, since the One as such is beyond the antithesis of "I" and "Me," and unattainable by any process properly described as knowledge. To know itself as One it would have to cease knowing itself, if I may put it paradoxically. The object of its knowledge must be what we *de facto* find is the ideal object of any perfect knowledge. The One can know itself only as the truth —the archetypal or intelligible world of which *qua* One it yet affords the possibility. That is, all that it can know of itself in turning back to behold itself is the possible world which it is.[1] But this knowledge of itself is conditioned by the antithesis of an *alter*. The One's knowledge of itself as the

[1] All this interpretation is based on v. 1, §§ 6-7 (487-488) [vol. ii. pp. 168-169]. Cf. v. 3, § 15 (512-513).

archetypal world of truth involves, and is dependent upon, the knowledge that it has lost its unity. It is now the Not-One, the Many over against the One. But it recognizes that *qua* One it is the source and justification of itself *qua* the Many, that is, *qua* the archetypal world. "In its thought of itself it thinks itself accidentally. For it is in looking to the Good (*i.e.* the One) that it thinks itself."[1] Or, in modern phrase, we might say that the subject recognizes itself and the object as derived from and dependent upon a higher unity in which both are transcended. In Plotinus's own words, "the One is the potentiality of all things. The things of which the One is the potentiality, Thought, separated as it were from that potentiality, now beholds. Otherwise it could not be Mind. At that moment it gains consciousness, as it were, from itself of the nature of its own potentiality —of its power of generating by itself its own essence, and of determining its own being by means of the power received by it from the One. It perceives, too, that its essence is, so to speak, a part of that which belongs to and is derived from the One, and that it is strengthened and brought to the fulness of being by and out of the One. It sees, too, that to itself from the One, as to the divisible from the indivisible, have come life and

[1] v. 6, § 5 (537) [vol. ii. p. 226, l. 20]. *καὶ γὰρ αὖ ἐν τῇ νοήσει αὑτοῦ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς αὑτὸ νοεῖ· πρὸς γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν βλέπον αὑτὸ νοεῖ· ἐνεργοῦν γὰρ αὖ ἑαυτὸ νοεῖ.*

thought and all things, precisely because the One itself is none of these things."[1]

The knowledge, however, that it is no longer the One, but the possible universe opposed to and derived from it, actualizes at the same moment that possibility. The One knows that *qua* One it may be, but that *qua* "may be," it actually is the world in question. *Qua* One it is all things *in potentia*, *qua* Potentiality it is suddenly and by the mere recognition of that *qua*-ness the whole universe of things *in actu*. The intelligible world *is*, at the moment it thinks itself; it thinks itself at the first instant it is possible for it to do so. That possibility has from all eternity been implied in the essence of the One. Thus the One becomes at once Being and Thought in the unity of an intellect which is its own subject and its own object.[2]

An inspection of the archetypal world at this point leads us to a further discovery in the shape of a deduction of the categories.[3] Mind in the first

[1] v. 1, § 7 (488) [vol. ii. p. 169, l. 27 *et seq.*]. *ἀλλὰ τὸ ἓν δύναμις πάντων. ὧν οὖν ἐστι δύναμις, ταῦτα ἀπὸ τῆς δυνάμεως οἷον σχιζομένη ἡ νόησις καθορᾷ. ἢ οὐκ ἂν ἦν νοῦς. ἐπεὶ καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἔχει ἤδη οἷον συναίσθησιν τῆς δυνάμεως, ὅτι δύναται οὐσίαν αὐτὸς γεννᾶν δι' αὐτὸν καὶ ὁρίζειν τὸ εἶναι αὐτῷ τῇ παρ' ἐκείνου δυνάμει, καὶ ὅτι οἷον μέρος ἔν τι τῶν ἐκείνου καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου ἡ οὐσία καὶ ῥώννυται παρ' ἐκείνου καὶ τελειοῦται εἰς οὐσίαν παρ' ἐκείνου καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου. ὁρᾷ δὲ αὐτῷ ἐκεῖθεν οἷον μεριστῷ ἐξ ἀμερίστου καὶ τὸ ζῆν καὶ τὸ νοεῖν καὶ πάντα, ὅτι ἐκεῖνο μηδὲν τῶν πάντων.*

[2] v. 2, § 1 (494). Cf. v. 3, § 10 (506) *et seq.*

[3] For a brief deduction *vide* v. 1, § 4 (485) [vol. ii. p. 166]; for a more elaborate, *vide* vi. 2, § 6 (600) *et seq.* [vol. ii. p. 306], § 19 (611) *et seq.* [vol. ii. p. 320].

place has real existence—it must think itself as being. Did it not exist it could not think. "Being" is then the first category. The second we should naturally expect to be correlated intelligence or Thought. But such is not the case. The categories are forms or conditions of Thought, and Thought is not a condition or form of itself. Thought is Being thinking itself, the self-knowledge, as it were, of the categories. But now the act of intellect in which Thought and Being are united displays two marked characteristics. On the one hand, we can distinguish between Thought and Being, on the other, we say that the two are somehow one. But to say that any two are one presupposes as its condition the categories of difference and identity.

But Being *is*, Being is living, sustaining, and preserving itself out of its own inner vitality. It exists *in actu*, ἐνεργείᾳ. This vitality and activity, however, by which Being persists in being, involves motion. Motion, however, is not an accident or an attribute of Being, it is its essence and is inseparable from it in thought. We cannot think of Being, save as existing in the full kinetic significance of the participial construction. Motion then—activity, actuality—will be our fourth category.

The motion, however, involved in Being's mere being, is precisely what keeps it what it is, unaltered in its nature, *i.e.* is precisely what keeps it at rest. Indeed, rest or stability is what first strikes us as the condition of all being, and it is only on second

glance that we see how *keeping* at rest involves activity and motion.

An analysis of the "thought" aspect of νοῦς reveals the same categories. Thought thinks itself as existing, as being. Its thought involves activity and motion. That is, Thought is thinking, is in ultimate analysis not a noun, but a verb. But by thinking, Thought constitutes and bounds itself, is what it is, persists as itself, in a word keeps itself stable, unalterable, and immobile.[1]

We have then the five prime categories—Being, Identity, Difference, Movement, and Rest. From these five all the other so-called categories, and genera, and species proceed by a process of logical deduction. Thus number is immediately implied in the *multiplicity* of the intelligible content. Beholding the continuity of its act of thought, the mind draws thence the idea of magnitude and quantity, and from the inexhaustibility of its power, that of infinity. Contemplating the beauty and perfection of its existence, it has the notion of *quality*. Difference and identity are in the same way the bases of similarity and dissimilarity, equality and inequality, and the like. And thus, petal by petal, the whole intelligible world of truth blows into full flower.[2]

In deriving Soul from Mind, Plotinus resorts

[1] This account is based on the text, vi. 2, §§ 6-8 (600-602) [vol. ii. p. 306 *et seq.*].

[2] vi. 2, § 21 (613 A *et seq.*) [vol. ii. pp. 322-323].

to the same analogies and employs the same arguments as he used in explaining the emanation of Mind from the One. Since by the existence of the intelligible the possibilities of existence are not exhausted, it too must perforce overflow.[1] Like the One, it has its two operations or "acts," an essential operation by which it is what it is, and an emanatory act by which it reproduces itself. This overflow or emanation from itself is ψυχή or Soul.

The reproduction of itself in ψυχή is both general and particular. Each form or archetype gives forth a particular soul or a λόγος σπερματικός, and the intelligible world in which the archetypes are organized, as we remember, on the analogy of logical inclusion and implication, projects itself in a World-Soul that includes the ψυχαί and the λόγοι σπερματικοί, *i.e.* the Ideas as formative forces, after the same figurative fashion.

By Soul or ψυχή, we are not to understand Soul in our use of the word as a self-conscious principle. This point is discussed at length by Plotinus, and the conclusion is that it is Mind which is the principle of self-consciousness in us. The proper operations of the soul are sensation and the synthesis of sensation by discursive thought. Discursive thought, indeed, knows itself, but knows itself as an unfulfilled activity, dependent upon and

[1] iv. 8, § 3 (472 A) [vol. ii. p. 147, l. 1 *et seq.*]. ὅτι μηδὲ οἷόν τε ἦν στῆναι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, δυναμένου ἐφεξῆς καὶ ἄλλου γενέσθαι ἐλάττονος μέν, ἀναγκαίου δὲ εἶναι, εἴπερ καὶ τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ.

realized in the Mind. Adequate self-knowledge is *sub specie aeternitatis.*[1]

In a word, the relations between Soul, with her operation of discursive thought, and Mind seem to be the exact analogues of those between Mind and the One. Mind in issuing from the One turns toward it, and by that return constitutes itself an archetypal world—the not-One; a world which though other than the One is yet derived from it, and by its desire to return to its origin is held in that state of perfect identity of subject and object in which the ideal of contemplative thought is forever realized. In like manner the Soul, turning towards the Mind whence she flows and striving to regain that state of complete self-consciousness which is her source, is thereby confirmed in her proper nature. This is her essential "operation" or "act."[2]

Perhaps the word most descriptive of her essence is life.[3] She is the principle of vitality and activity in all things: the Aristotelian φύσις, we might almost say, of all things, by which things become what they are, exercise their proper functions, and are conformed to their proper ends. She creates and sustains all life and nature, "breathing life into all things nourished by earth or sea, all the dwellers in the air, all the divine stars of heaven. Yea, the sun and this great firmament of heaven she hath set in order, and herself maketh them to revolve in due

[1] For all this *vide* v. 3, §§ 1-4 (496-500) [vol. ii. pp. 178-183].
[2] v. 1, § 3 (484) [vol. ii. p. 165]. [3] iv. 7, § 11 (465) [vol. ii. p. 139].

courses. . . . And the heaven moved in eternal motion under the wise guidance of Soul, becomes a living and a blessed being and acquires due honour when once Soul has come to dwell within it; but before the coming of Soul it was but a dead body, mere earth and water. . . . And though the heaven is manifold, and different in different places, it is one by virtue of her power, and it is through her that this ordered universe is a god. . . ."[1]

[1] v. 1, § 2 (482-483) [vol. ii. p. 162, ll. 18–p. 163, l. 31]. (2) *ἐνθυμείσθω τοίνυν πρῶτον ἐκεῖνο πᾶσα ψυχή, ὡς αὐτὴ μὲν ζῷα ἐποίησε πάντα ἐμπνεύσασα αὐτοῖς ζωήν, ἅ τε γῆ τρέφει ἅ τε θάλασσα ἅ τε ἐν ἀέρι ἅ τε ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρα θεῖα, αὐτὴ δὲ ἥλιον, αὐτὴ δὲ τὸν μέγαν τοῦτον οὐρανόν, καὶ αὐτὴ ἐκόσμησεν, αὐτὴ δὲ ἐν τάξει περιάγει φύσις οὖσα ἑτέρα ὧν κοσμεῖ καὶ ὧν κινεῖ καὶ ἃ ζῆν ποιεῖ· καὶ τούτων ἀνάγκη εἶναι τιμιωτέραν, γιγνομένων [μὲν] τούτων καὶ φθειρομένων, ὅταν αὐτὰ ψυχὴ ἀπολείπῃ ἡ χορηγεῖ τὸ ζῆν, αὐτὴ δὲ οὖσα ἀεὶ τῷ μὴ ἀπολείπειν ἑαυτήν. τίς δὲ [ὁ] τρόπος τῆς χορηγίας τοῦ ζῆν ἔν τε τῷ σύμπαντι ἔν τε τοῖς ἑκάστοις, ὧδε λογιζέσθω. σκοπείσθω δὴ τὴν μεγάλην ψυχὴν ἄλλη ψυχὴ οὐ σμικρὰ ἀξία τοῦ σκοπεῖν γενομένη ἀπαλλαγεῖσα ἀπάτης καὶ τῶν γεγοητευκότων τὰς ἄλλας ἡσύχῳ τῇ καταστάσει. ἥσυχον δὲ αὐτῇ ἔστω μὴ μόνον τὸ περικείμενον σῶμα καὶ ὁ τοῦ σώματος κλύδων, ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶν τὸ περιέχον· ἥσυχος μὲν γῆ, ἥσυχος δὲ θάλασσα καὶ ἀὴρ καὶ αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς (ἀμείνων). νοείτω δὲ πάντοθεν εἰς αὐτὸν ἑστῶτα ψυχὴν ἔξωθεν οἷον εἰσρέουσαν καὶ εἰσχυθεῖσαν καὶ πάντοθεν εἰσιοῦσαν καὶ εἰσλάμπουσαν· οἷον σκοτεινὸν νέφος ἡλίου βολαὶ φωτίσασαι λάμπειν ποιοῦσι χρυσοειδῆ ὄψιν διδοῦσαι, οὕτω τοι καὶ ψυχὴ ἐλθοῦσα εἰς σῶμα οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκε μὲν ζωήν, ἔδωκε δὲ ἀθανασίαν, ἤγειρε δὲ κείμενον. ὁ δὲ κινηθεὶς κίνησιν ἀίδιον ὑπὸ ψυχῆς ἐμφρόνως ἀγούσης ζῷον εὔδαιμον ἐγένετο, ἔσχε τε ἀξίαν οὐρανὸς ψυχῆς εἰσοικισθείσης ὢν πρὸ ψυχῆς σῶμα νεκρόν, γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ, μᾶλλον δὲ σκότος ὕλης καὶ μὴ ὄν καὶ "ὃ στυγέουσιν οἱ θεοί," φησί τις. γένοιτο δ' ἂν φανερωτέρα αὐτῆς καὶ ἐναργεστέρα ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ φύσις, εἴ τις ἐνταῦθα διανοηθείη, ὅπως περιέχει καὶ ἄγει ταῖς αὐτῆς βουλήσεσι τὸν οὐρανόν. παντὶ μὲν γὰρ τῷ μεγέθει τούτῳ, ὅσος ἐστίν, ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὴν καὶ πᾶν διάστημα καὶ μέγα καὶ μικρὸν ἐψύχωται ἄλλου μὲν ἄλλη κειμένου τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ μὲν ὠδί, τοῦ δὲ ὠδὶ ὄντος, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἐξ ἐναντίας, τῶν δὲ ἄλλην ἀπάρτησιν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ἐχόντων. ἀλλ' οὐχ ἡ ψυχὴ οὕτως, οὐδὲ μέρει ἑαυτῆς ἑκάστῳ κατακερματισθεῖσα*

In a word, Soul is Nature in that eulogistic sense in which we sometimes use the term, as when we speak of "mother" Nature, suggesting not the mere body of natural phenomena, but a sympathetic spirit and tendency incarnate within it.[1] Or, to change the figure, we might say that the soul is *applied* science, reason no longer theoretic, but employed in creating according to its own precepts. This is indeed precisely Plotinus's notion. The Soul, he tells us, is the word, the expression, the image of νοῦς. She is νοῦς expressing itself in a sensible medium.[2] Ψυχή, however, is even more obviously inconclusive than νοῦς. She expresses as it were a relation in which νοῦς stands, is νοῦς exercised with an eye not to itself, but to further possibilities of being, including indeed the possibility of this exercise itself. But the possession of vision is useless, and the exercise of it futile, if it be of mere blankness. A relation that is a relation to nothing is without meaning. The emanation of ψυχή is irrelevant without a *terminus ad quem*. *De facto*, too, the possibilities of being are not exhausted by her procession. Both "mother" Nature

μορίῳ ψυχῆς ζῆν ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ πάντα ζῇ τῇ ὅλῃ, καὶ πάρεστι πᾶσα πανταχοῦ τῷ γεννήσαντι πατρὶ ὁμοιουμένη καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἓν καὶ κατὰ τὸ πάντη. καὶ πολὺς ὢν ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἄλλος ἄλλῃ ἓν ἐστι τῇ ταύτης δυνάμει καὶ θεός ἐστι διὰ ταύτην ὁ κόσμος ὅδε.

[1] At the same time, Plotinus seems to distinguish between Nature even taken in this sense, and the World-Soul. She is secondary, an offspring of the World-Soul, ψυχὴ οὖσα, γέννημα ψυχῆς προτέρας δυνατώτερον ζώσης, iii. 8, § 4 (345) [vol. i. p. 335, l. 7]; cf. iii. 8, § 2 (344) [vol. i. p. 334, l. 343].

[2] v. 1, § 3 (484) [vol. ii. p. 165].

and ourselves have bodies as well as souls. The corporeal world exists.

So it is that ψυχή must also overflow, and by an emanation from herself constitute the phenomenal world.[1] Besides her essential "act" or operation she must have a reproductive "act" by virtue of which the World-Soul radiates about herself the physical universe, and each individual soul and λόγος σπερματικός their particular body within that universe.

To revert now to the problem in hand. We have seen that emanation is a continuous and homogeneous process of the same complexion throughout. For the same reasons, in the same manner, and by the same devices as νοῦς proceeds from the One, ψυχή proceeds from νοῦς and the corporeal world from ψυχή. There are no breaks within it, no jumps, apparently no opportunity for freak or accident or for violent alteration in its value and significance such as the incidence of Evil involves. But yet Evil exists, as Plotinus confesses. How explain the fact?

From all that we know of mystic sentiment, we

[1] iv. 8, § 2 (470) [vol. ii. p. 145, ll. 3-17]. Cf. v. 2, §§ 1-2 (494). διττὴ γὰρ ἐπιμέλεια παντός, τοῦ μὲν καθόλου κελεύσει κοσμοῦσα ἀπράγμονι ἐπιστασίᾳ βασιλικῇ, τοῦ δὲ καθέκαστα ἤδη αὐτουργῷ τινι ποιήσει συναφῇ τῇ πρὸς τὸ πραττόμενον τὸ πρᾶττον τοῦ πραττομένου τῆς φύσεως ἀναπιμπλᾶσα. τῆς δὲ θείας ψυχῆς τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἅπαντα διοικεῖν ἀεὶ λεγομένης, ὑπερεχούσης μὲν τῷ κρείττονι, δύναμιν δὲ τὴν ἐσχάτην εἰς τὸ εἴσω πεμπούσης, αἰτίαν μὲν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἂν ἔτι λέγοιτο ἔχειν τοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἐν χείρονι πεποιηκέναι, ἥ τε ψυχὴ οὐκ ἀπεστέρηται τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ἐξ ἀιδίου τοῦτ' ἔχουσα καὶ ἔξουσα ἀεί, ὃ μὴ οἷόν τε παρὰ φύσιν αὐτῇ εἶναι· ὅπερ διηνεκῶς αὐτῇ ἀεὶ ὑπάρχει οὔποτε ἀρξάμενον. Cf. iii. 9, § 3 (357).

should expect to see both physical and moral evil referred to an ultimate metaphysical evil. Logically for Plotinus, Evil should occur at the beginning of the emanatory process. The purest overflow from the One, he should say, being other than the One, cannot but be an evil and imperfect thing. Νοῦς is the first parent in the sin of whose mere existence all Being fell. Its plurality and activity are the prototypes of all division, conflict, and becoming. The process, then, is birth-marked with Evil. What wonder that as it develops the mark grows angry and inflamed!

Had Plotinus said this, his theodicy would have been simpler, more logical, and less great:—a brilliant variation, by virtue of its splendid attempt to solve the initial difficulty, on the mystic theme. As it is, some tendency to say it persists throughout, and to some extent confuses his thought. But whether it was due to his heritage from Aristotle and the Stoics, or to a sentimental love of nature, or to the practical optimism of one who was after all a very level-headed and prosperous business man, the direction of his teaching is unmistakably against a doctrine of metaphysical evil. Evil appears for him, not in the first, but in the last stage of emanation, in connection with the radiation from ψυχή of the corporeal world, however difficult it may be to explain its occurrence at that point.

As regards the freedom from evil of νοῦς, and of ψυχή so far as her cosmic significance is concerned,

we have both circumstantial and direct evidence. It is unnecessary to dwell here upon the Plotinian panegyrics of νοῦς. Its beauty, its perfection, its essential divinity are constantly celebrated by him.[1] It is the express image of the Most High, a great God, the Second God, an unspeakable beauty sent before the face of the One, and mediating between it and the World-Soul, the throne of the One, a prince of the blood-royal.[2] These and a host of other epithets applied to it by Plotinus are all incompatible with any attribution to it of imperfection.

But besides the panegyrics we find a direct exclusion of archetypes of evil things from the intelligible world, suggested doubtless by Plato's query in the *Parmenides* whether or no such mean things as hair, mud, or dirt are to be dignified with ideal prototypes.[3] "Touching," he says, "the question whether there are also Ideas of things arising from putrefaction or of disagreeable things, and also of filth and mud, it must be said that everything which Mind brings with it from the first principle is excellent, and that therein Ideas such as we have mentioned are not to be found. . . ."[4]

The immunity of the World-Soul, and indeed of the individual soul, so long as she moves in her own

[1] Cf. v. 9, § 3 (556-557); v. 1, § 4 (485).

[2] Cf. v. 5, § 3 (522).

[3] *Parmenides*, 130 c.

[4] v. 9, § 14 (565) [vol. ii. p. 259, l. 21 *et seq.*]. περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐκ σήψεως καὶ τῶν χαλεπῶν, εἰ κἀκεῖ εἶδος, καὶ εἰ ῥύπου καὶ πηλοῦ, λεκτέον, ὡς, ὅσα κομίζεται νοῦς ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου, πάντα ἄριστα· ἐν οἷς οὐ ταῦτα.

sphere, is no less clearly emphasized. The celebrations of ψυχή are lavish.[1] She, too, is naturally good, happy, and divine,[2] "akin to the divine nature and to the eternal,"[3] displaying in her unclouded essence all the virtues and perfections. "The Soul, as she plays about the Mind, gazes upon it and contemplating what is within it, sees God through it. And this is the blessed and sorrowless life of the gods, and there is no evil there, and had it been there it would not have been evil."[4] It is only in her relations to body, or, more strictly, since conjunction with the body is not necessarily vitiating, in a particular relation to a particular body, that Evil occurs. "There are two reasons why the communing of the soul with the body brings difficulties. The first is that it hinders thought, the second, that it fills the soul with pleasures and desires and pains. . . ."[5] This trouble, however, arises only in the case of individual souls. The World-Soul is free from it. Her body, which is the universe, is obedient to her command, and

[1] Cf. passage already quoted, v. 1, § 2 (482-483) [vol. ii. p. 162, l. 18]. [2] v. 1, § 3 (484) [vol. ii. p. 164].

[3] iv. 7, § 10 (464) [vol. ii. p. 137, ll. 13-14]. 10. ὅτι δὲ τῇ θειοτέρᾳ φύσει συγγενὴς ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τῇ ἀιδίῳ, δῆλον μὲν ποιεῖ καὶ τὸ μὴ σῶμα αὐτὴν δεδεῖχθαι.

[4] i. 8, § 2 (73) [vol. i. p. 100, l. 26 *et seq.*]. ἡ δὲ ἔξωθεν περὶ τοῦτον χορεύουσα ψυχὴ πρὸς αὐτὸν βλέπουσα καὶ τὸ εἴσω αὐτοῦ θεωμένη τὸν θεὸν δι' αὐτοῦ βλέπει. καὶ οὗτος θεῶν ἀπήμων καὶ μακάριος βίος καὶ τὸ κακὸν οὐδαμοῦ ἐνταῦθα καὶ εἰ ἐνταῦθα ἔστη, κακὸν οὐδὲν ἂν ἦν, ἀλλὰ πρῶτα καὶ δεύτερα τἀγαθὰ καὶ τρίτα.

[5] iv. 8, § 2 (471) [vol. ii. p. 145, l. 21 *et seq.*]. δύο γὰρ ὄντων δι' ἃ δυσχεραίνεται ἡ ψυχῆς πρὸς σώματα κοινωνία, ὅτι τε ἐμπόδιον πρὸς τὰς νοήσεις γίγνεται, καὶ ὅτι ἡδονῶν καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ λυπῶν πίμπλησιν αὐτήν.

impedes in no wise her essential operations. "But though it be said that the divine Soul in this wise for ever rules the whole heaven, transcending it with her better part and sending her lowest power into this world of ours, yet no one can blame God for that he has set the World-Soul in something worse than herself. The Soul indeed is not deprived of her natural function; that she holds from eternity and will hold for ever, nor can it in any wise be contrary to her nature. . . . So it is that she can never experience any fear about a body of this kind, nor will any concern for it sway her and drag her down from the blessed vision of higher things; rather is she ever in the presence of heavenly things, though at the same time she orders this whole universe by an easy exercise of power."[1]

Finally, we may appeal to the passage in the

[1] iv. 8, § 2 (470) [vol. ii. p. 145, l. 8 *et seq.*]. *τῆς δὲ θείας ψυχῆς τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἅπαντα διοικεῖν ἀεὶ λεγομένης, ὑπερεχούσης μὲν τῷ κρείττονι, δύναμιν δὲ τὴν ἐσχάτην εἰς τὸ εἴσω πεμπούσης, αἰτίαν μὲν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἂν ἔτι λέγοιτο ἔχειν τοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἐν χείροσι πεποιηκέναι, ἥ τε ψυχὴ οὐκ ἀπεστέρηται τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ἐξ ἀιδίου τοῦτ' ἔχουσα καὶ ἔξουσα ἀεί, ὃ μὴ οἷόν τε παρὰ φύσιν αὐτῇ εἶναι· ὅπερ διηνεκῶς αὐτῇ ἀεὶ ὑπάρχει οὔποτε ἀρξάμενον. τάς τε τῶν ἀστέρων ψυχὰς τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον πρὸς τὸ σῶμα ἔχειν λέγων, ὥσπερ τὸ πᾶν— ἐντίθησι γὰρ καὶ τούτων τὰ σώματα εἰς τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς περιφοράς— ἀποσώζοι ἂν καὶ τὴν περὶ τούτους πρέπουσαν εὐδαιμονίαν. δύο γὰρ ὄντων δι' ἃ δυσχεραίνεται ἡ ψυχῆς πρὸς σώματα κοινωνία, ὅτι τε ἐμπόδιον πρὸς τὰς νοήσεις γίγνεται, καὶ ὅτι ἡδονῶν καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ λυπῶν πίμπλησιν αὐτήν, οὐδέτερον τούτων ἂν γένοιτο ψυχῇ, ἥτις μὴ εἰς τὸ εἴσω ἔδυ τοῦ σώματος, μηδέ τινός ἐστι, μηδὲ ἐκείνου ἐγένετο, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο αὐτῆς, ἔστι τε τοιοῦτον, οἷον μήτε τινὸς δεῖσθαι, μήτε τινὶ ἐλλείπειν· ὥστε μηδὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπιθυμιῶν πίμπλασθαι ἢ φόβων. οὐδὲν γὰρ δεινὸν μήποτε περὶ σώματος προσδοκήσῃ τοιούτου, οὔτε τις ἀσχολία νεῦσιν ποιοῦσα κάτω ἀπάγει τῆς κρείττονος καὶ μακαρίας θέας, ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἀεὶ πρὸς ἐκείνοις ἀπράγμονι δυνάμει τόδε τὸ πᾶν κοσμοῦσα.*

Ennead concerning the origin of Evil, in which Plotinus groups the One, νοῦς, and ψυχή together as a kind of Trinity, holy and free from all taint of imperfection. What, he asks, is the Good? "It is that upon which all things depend, which all things desire; for it is the source of their being and they stand in need of it. For itself, it is in want of naught, self-sufficient, lacking nothing; it is the measure and limit of all things, giving from out of itself Mind and Being and Soul and Life and the activity that belongs to Mind. And till one reaches it, all things are beautiful; but itself is super-beautiful and higher than the best. . . . Mind is its first activity and first essence, though the Good abides within itself. Mind exercises its activity about it, living round it as it were. But the Soul, as it moves about the Mind, gazes upon it, and contemplating what is within it, sees God through it. And this is the blessed and sorrowless life of the gods, and there is no Evil there. Had it been there it would not be evil. But there are primary and secondary and tertiary Goods, and all are around the King of all, and he is the cause of all good things, and all are due to him. And the secondary Goods are around the second (hypostasis) and the tertiary around the third. If such be the nature of real existence and of what transcends real existence, there can be no Evil in either. For both are good."[1]

[1] i. 8, § 2 (72-73) [vol. i. pp. 100-101, l. 6]. Cf. also ii. 9, § 13 (212) [vol. i. p. 203, l. 5 *et seq.*]. 2. *νῦν δὲ λεγέσθω, τίς ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ*

There can be no question of the import of these passages. It is certainly to exclude Evil from the first two stages of emanation. But this is apparently to disavow metaphysical evil. For it amounts to saying that there are different kinds of perfection, one proper to the One, another to νοῦς, a third to ψυχή, and that none is to be blamed for not being the other. We shall indeed find the same argument presently used to justify the nature of the physical universe. This has, it will be said, a native perfection which it perfectly exemplifies, and is not to be

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φύσις, καθ' ὅσον τοῖς παροῦσι λόγοις προσήκει. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο, εἰς ὃ πάντα ἀνήρτηται καὶ οὗ πάντα τὰ ὄντα ἐφίεται ἀρχὴν ἔχοντα αὐτὸ κἀκείνου δεόμενα· τὸ δ' ἐστὶν ἀνενδεές, ἱκανὸν ἑαυτῷ, μηδενὸς δεόμενον, μέτρον πάντων καὶ πέρας, δὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ νοῦν καὶ οὐσίαν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ περὶ νοῦν ἐνέργειαν. καὶ μέχρι μὲν τούτου καλὰ πάντα· αὐτός τε γὰρ ὑπέρκαλος καὶ ἐπέκεινα τῶν ἀρίστων βασιλεύων ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, νοῦ ἐκείνου ὄντος οὐ κατὰ νοῦν, ὃν οἰηθείη ἄν τις κατὰ τοὺς παρ' ἡμῖν λεγομένους νοῦς εἶναι τοὺς ἐκ προτάσεων συμπληρουμένους καὶ τῶν λεγομένων συνιέναι δυναμένους λογιζομένους τε καὶ τοῦ ἀκολούθου θεωρίαν ποιουμένους καὶ ἐξ ἀκολουθίας τὰ ὄντα θεωμένους ὡς πρότερον οὐκ ἔχοντας, ἀλλὰ κενοὺς ἔτι πρὶν μαθεῖν ὄντας, καίτοι νοῦς ὄντας. οὐ δὴ ἐκεῖνος ὁ νοῦς τοιοῦτος, ἀλλ' ἔχει πάντα καὶ ἔστι πάντα καὶ σύνεστιν αὑτῷ συνὼν καὶ ἔχει πάντα οὐκ ἔχων. οὐ γὰρ ἄλλα, ὁ δὲ ἄλλος· οὐδὲ χωρὶς ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ· ὅλον τε γάρ ἐστιν ἕκαστον καὶ πανταχῇ πᾶν· καὶ οὐ συγκέχυται, ἀλλὰ αὖ χωρίς. τὸ γοῦν μεταλαμβάνον οὐχ ὁμοῦ πάντων, ἀλλ' ὅτου δύναται μεταλαμβάνει. καὶ ἔστι πρώτη ἐνέργεια ἐκείνου καὶ πρώτη οὐσία ἐκείνου μένοντος ἐν ἑαυτῷ· ἐνεργεῖ μέντοι περὶ ἐκεῖνον οἷον περὶ ἐκεῖνον ζῶν. ἡ δὲ ἔξωθεν περὶ τοῦτον χορεύουσα ψυχὴ πρὸς αὐτὸν βλέπουσα καὶ τὸ εἴσω αὐτοῦ θεωμένη τὸν θεὸν δι' αὐτοῦ βλέπει. καὶ οὗτος θεῶν ἀπήμων καὶ μακάριος βίος καὶ τὸ κακὸν οὐδαμοῦ ἐνταῦθα καὶ εἰ ἐνταῦθα ἔστη, κακὸν οὐδὲν ἂν ἦν, ἀλλὰ πρῶτα καὶ δεύτερα τἀγαθὰ καὶ τρίτα. [καὶ] περὶ τὸν πάντων βασιλέα πάντα ἐστί, καὶ ἐκεῖνο αἴτιον πάντων καλῶν, καὶ πάντα ἐστὶν ἐκείνου, καὶ δεύτερον περὶ τὰ δεύτερα καὶ τρίτον περὶ τὰ τρίτα. 3. εἰ δὴ τοιαῦτά ἐστι τὰ ὄντα καὶ τὸ ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὄντων, οὐκ ἂν ἐν τοῖς οὖσι τὸ κακὸν ἐνείη, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὄντων· ἀγαθὰ γὰρ ταῦτα.

condemned as imperfect for not being other than it is.

But even supposing that Plotinus were unreservedly committed to this point of view, which, as we shall see later, he is not, the matter would not be so straightforward as it appears at first sight. On the contrary he has involved himself in a perplexity which besets every attempt to conceive of perfection as an expanded, multiple, and complex state of existence. Between the different factors of such a state it is impossible not to make comparisons of higher and lower. There must be, as Plotinus admits, and as we are bound on the face of things to admit, a hierarchy of perfections. The perfection of the plant, it seems only common sense to say, is not so perfect as that of the beast, nor that of the beast as that of the man, nor that of the man as that of the angel, nor any of these as that of God. Yet all are perfections. This is the Aristotelian doctrine, and Plotinus is consciously a good Peripatetic when he speaks of Mind as a secondary good, and of Soul as a tertiary.

But it may be asked, Is not this admission of grades of perfection suicidal? Is it not foredoomed by a fatal implication that all except the highest grade are really degrees of imperfection? The question is pertinent. We are on the verge of discovering the great self-contradiction which in the end must invalidate the Plotinian theodicy. Let us pause and consider it.

Reflection upon the uses of the term "perfection"

in philosophical discussion quickly discloses two very different senses in which the term may be employed. These senses we may designate broadly as the "mechanical" or "naturalistic," and the "moral."[1] Mechanical perfection has reference to the explicability of events, and answers to the satisfaction we take in accounting for things by natural causes. "Moral" perfection, as the term is employed here, is estimated by the bearing events have upon our interest in finding our world not only intelligible, but also satisfactory in every respect, καλὸν κἀγαθόν. That these two kinds of perfection need not coincide is obvious. It is no harder to discover the natural causes of moral evil than it is of moral good; and the interest in understanding the world is as satisfied with the one discovery as with the other. Objectively considered, the world regarded as a mechanism is perfect as it stands. It accounts for all its events and parts, and all things and types and occurrences are equally good expressions of its workings.

Since the mechanical conception of nature gives every fact equal and sufficient reason for existence, there can be no comparison in point of mechanical perfection. "Better and worse," "higher and lower," are oppositions which seem significant only in relation to a standard set by moral ideals, and based, whatever its cosmic validity, on the ethical and aesthetic interests of mankind.

[1] I use "moral" here to cover the "aesthetic" as well as the strictly ethical interests. Strictly speaking there are as many kinds of perfection as there are satisfactions.

But we must not be too hasty in our dichotomy. A third kind of perfection is quick to press its claims, denouncing the very establishment of our first dilemma as a bit of arrogance and anthropomorphism. I mean the perfection which we accord to things according as they realize their proper natures. Thus we talk of a prize dog or a fine horse, or even of the perfect fit of a suit of clothes. Such perfection can hardly be said to be estimated by the naturalistic standard, since the mongrel or the hack or the misfit can be just as well explained as the "higher" example of the type; but again it cannot be called, apparently, a "moral" perfection, since judged by moral standards it appears deficient. The horse or dog, however perfect after their kind, are "lower" animals; the suit of clothes, however fine the stuff and smart the cut of it, is not so high up in the hierarchy of being as the meanest protoplasm. Still we do not deem it appropriate to reproach the suit of clothes with not being a protoplasm, or the horse or dog with not being a man. Fault-finding is justified only if they be not all that a suit or horse or dog may be within the limits of their respective natures and relatively to standards which are apparently of their own setting. We seem then to have found something which is really perfect and imperfect at the same time; a standard which can be regarded as a final measure of perfection within its own sphere, and yet as wanting in perfection relatively to some ultimate standard of perfection in general.

We must scrutinize this claim all the more closely, as it is with this point in mind that Plotinus writes. And careful scrutiny will, I think, disallow the pretence of this species of excellence to assured and independent existence, and reveal beneath it a somewhat subtle confusion of our original factors of natural (or mechanical) and moral perfection.

This confusion is seen in the first place in our imposition upon Nature of even the type, to say nothing of the so-called perfect type, as a natural standard for the estimation of individuals. If the object be inanimate, such a standard is set not by Nature, but by us. Its perfection after its kind means, not an intrinsic quality or condition, but a relation to our interests and sensibilities. When for example we talk of "perfect" weather, we are reading into Nature a sympathy with human preferences, or at least are thinking of her as striving to embody a certain form and as measuring success or failure according as she more or less attains her end. But Nature mechanically considered is inveterately individualistic. She is an order of particular facts, each of which is to be explained by its own particular antecedents and not by any striving towards any type.

In the case of animate objects the relativity of standards is even more apparent. We have now to deal with a possible purpose and intrinsic character in the object, to which our notion of what the object ought to be may well be not only foreign, but hostile. Thus the thoroughbred to which we award the blue

ribbon may for all we know be worshipping at the fetlocks of some plodder in the dray, and the award of prizes at the dog-show may inspire many an anxious canine theodicy labouring to justify the ways of man to dogs.

Indeed, it takes very little reflection to breed these doubts to which we have just given utterance. How, we are very soon driven to ask as we look out over the world, are we to know a thing from its entelechy or perfection, to distinguish between what a thing is and what it ought, or is intended, to be? Of an inner intention on its part we can know nothing, even if the attribution of such an intention did not imply falling into the very confusion we are anxious to avoid, and from its appearance we might well think it to be self-realized at every moment in its career. Taken at any instant it exhibits a certain structure and exhibits that structure perfectly. It can never be surprised as other than a faithful and flawless copy of what it is. To take any one of its moments and make it a standard for all the rest, or to take any one thing and make it a pattern for the others which resemble it, is to stretch Nature with open violence upon the Procrustean bed of human whims.

Our supposed third kind of perfection, then, involves at the outset a covert introduction of final causes into Nature and resolves itself readily into a confusion of natural and moral perfection. A similar confusion vitiates the attempt to arrange different kinds of perfection *qua* perfections in a hierarchy

according as they approach our ideal of perfection in the abstract. We say glibly enough, to be sure, that the perfect horse is not so perfect a being as the perfect man, nor the perfect man as God. But that is simply to say that the perfect horse and the perfect man are perfect examples of imperfect sorts of beings. Equine and human excellence fall short of the standard or type of perfection in general, just as the individual man or horse falls short of his proper type. That is, equine and human perfections are imperfect perfections—are imperfections. Or conversely one might argue that if it be logical to say that human perfection is perfect, but not so perfect as the divine, it must also be logical to say of any individual human being that he is a perfect man, but at the same time not so perfect a man as some one else. But the latter statement would seem to be absurd.

The upshot of the discussion is this: that perfection is superlative, that things either do or do not live up to the standard which it sets, and that of things which fulfil its requirements there is no comparison in point of value. There may be indeed different kinds of perfection, but of imperfection only are there degrees.

In a world, then, perfect in all respects, we could find no basis for making any distinction between things as better and worse. Each being in such a world would be perfect after its kind, satisfied and at rest in its own nature, without jealousy of the

perfection proper to other beings. No individual would be superior or inferior to another. Each would merely be different from its neighbours. It would be itself and content to be itself. To any Dante who should ask of it,

> Ma dimmi : voi che siete qui felici,
> Desiderate voi più alto loco . . . ?

it would reply in Piccarda's words, and with Piccarda's smile,

> Frate, la nostra volontà quieta
> Virtù di carità, che fa volerne
> Sol quel ch' avemo, e d' altro non ci asseta.

In a word, all difference in value would from the point of view of a perfect universe be turned into simple distinctions in fact. Each part of such a world would feel as Dante felt in Piccarda's answer,

> Chiaro mi fu allor com' ogni dove
> In cielo è Paradiso. . . .

But only an exile like himself could have added,

> . . . e sì la grazia
> Del sommo ben d' un modo non vi piove.[1]

Still, not to equivocate is fraught with such startling implications for theology, that clear thinking seems to be avoided if only *ad majorem gloriam Dei*. Otherwise the *kingdom* of God turns out to be of this world only, and in Paradise, hitherto set apart as his special realm, God is forced to abdicate his throne and take his place as a simple member without special prerogative in a

[1] *Paradiso*, iii. ll. 64-90.

republic of perfected substances, between which in their estimation of themselves and of one another there can be no question of better or worse.

Consider again, for a moment, the consequences of a world in which all things are perfect after their kind. Each will be self-realized and self-satisfied, sure that no place or experience could be happier than its own. Otherwise it would have to consider its perfection to be not so perfect as perfection might be. But a perfection, which is not so perfect as it might be, is a self-contradiction.

All perfection, then, is bound to consider itself, *qua* perfection, absolute. A perfect being indeed may recognize beings other than himself, and kinds of perfection other than his own, but he cannot regard them as better or worse than his without thereby destroying the significance of his own excellence. To say, for instance, that I am perfect, but not so perfect as God, is to talk nonsense. I have not attained the primary condition of perfect happiness till I can say that none is happier than I. Piccarda by right should have found Dante's question about a "più alto loco," a "higher place," unintelligible; for in the language of heaven there are no comparatives or superlatives.

Hence for the soul of anything that is truly in Paradise, God cannot be a higher, but merely another being. There, indeed, the angels of all things do continually behold his face, but as the face of a fellow, one of themselves. All things will be gods

in their own and one another's eyes. Gods in their own eyes they will be, because each can find nothing more perfectly divine than itself: gods in one another's, and that without hierarchy of divinity, because there can be no comparison in point of value between the components of a truly beatific vision, each one of which will have its proper and incomparable beauty. In Paradise there will be of necessity none but polytheists.

This conclusion, however, is more startling than alarming. It has no sting if only it be grasped firmly. For the struggling and aspiring imperfect soul the existence of God means, indeed, the existence, ideal or actual, of an unattained perfection in which the will will find its peace. But for the perfected spirit it means no more, for no more is possible, than that perfection is at length realized, and that the will is wholly satisfied in an experience which it is content to take at its face value, without comparison between its components or moments. To the perfected spirit God will mean not another person, but just the fact that it itself is now the kind of person it is, with the experience it has. He is not a person, but a "state" in both senses of the word. God is Heaven.

It need not surprise us, however, to find ghosts of these difficulties haunting the question of grades of perfection throughout ancient philosophy. Thus, Plato is confronted with the naturalistic difficulty (a difficulty, be it said, never settled for him) in the

famous passage in the *Parmenides* already mentioned, where Socrates is in doubt whether to attribute Ideas to mean and disagreeable things or not. And it is ultimately the same difficulty which besets him in his attempt to arrange the Ideas in a hierarchy culminating in the Idea of the Good, forgetful, as we might say, that the Good is not a substance, but a relation between substances, and that its Idea is not a hypostasis extraneous and superior to the other Ideas, but merely expresses their perfection and divinity in one another's sight.

In like manner Aristotle's doctrine of the relativity of Form and Matter, in which every object except God is twofold, Form in relation to its sources, Matter in relation to its further development, has all the implications of naturalism. For every object at every moment of its career may be said to be in full possession of an entelechy of one sort or another. Aristotle avoids naturalism indeed only by assuming a rigid ladder of Forms up and down which Matter is continually climbing, the top and bottom of which are arbitrarily determined by reference to human interests and ideals. Nature is supposed to concur in our judgment of her parts and processes as more or less perfect and to estimate their value by the same standards as we employ. Thus the horse is supposed to be in her eyes as well as in ours more perfect than the tree, the man more perfect than the horse. Aristotle, however, seems to have vaguely realized his confusion of natural with moral

perfection, and to have vacillated in consequence. It is difficult, for example, as regards the relation of God to the world, to say whether the world is conceived as ever striving to transcend its own nature and become God, or as seeking merely to enact its proper mundane perfection with the same completeness with which he is divine. The truth is, I think, that Aristotle is trying to conceive it as both. Like Plato, he wishes to take with one eye the human, with the other the cosmic point of view. He tries naturalistically to make of the Forms the entelechies or absolute perfections of their particulars, and yet to arrange these different perfections in a graded order of moral excellence. There is, of course, no harm in this so long as one recognizes that one is using the term "perfection" in two quite different senses. But this is just what Aristotle overlooks. He employs the term univocally.

It is not surprising to find Plotinus involved in the same difficulties, considering his Platonic and Aristotelian heritage. How near his argument is in places to naturalism we shall have very shortly to consider. Of his treatment of grades of perfection and metaphysical evil we may say that he, too, takes with one eye the inside, with the other the outside point of view. In the passages just quoted there can be no doubt of his inclination to admit the existence of different kinds of perfection. Νοῦς is good and perfect after its kind, ψυχή is the same. Neither is to be considered as in any way

evil, because it is itself and not the One. This point has been amply illustrated. But on the other hand he does not perceive, nor can he admit the logical implication, that different kinds of perfection cannot be compared in point of perfection without equivocation. There cannot be the slightest doubt that he considered Mind, if perfect, of a less degree of perfection than the One, and in the same way Soul less excellent than Mind. It is not true that "in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than other," but "the glory equal." Their majesty may be co-eternal and their generation and procession from all time, yet Mind is a second good, and Soul a third, not only in point of derivation, but of goodness.[1] Goodness appertains to them only adjectively. The essential, primal, and original Good is God, and God alone. This point also is fully brought out in the sketch we have given of the nature and method of the process of emanation.

[1] Cf. ii. 9, § 13 (212) [vol. i. p. 202, l. 29–p. 203, l. 14]. *εἰ δὲ ἄνθρωποι τίμιόν τι παρ' ἄλλα ζῷα, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ταῦτα οὐ τυραννίδος ἕνεκα ἐν τῷ παντὶ ὄντα, ἀλλὰ κόσμον καὶ τάξιν παρέχοντα. ἃ δὲ λέγεται γίνεσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν σημεῖα νομίζειν τῶν ἐσομένων εἶναι, γίνεσθαι δὲ τὰ γινόμενα διάφορα καὶ τύχαις—οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε ἦν ταὐτὰ περὶ ἑκάστους συμβαίνειν—καὶ καιροῖς γενέσεων καὶ τόποις πλεῖστον ἀφεστηκόσι καὶ διαθέσεσι ψυχῶν. καὶ οὐκ ἀπαιτητέον πάλιν ἀγαθοὺς πάντας, οὐδ' ὅτι μὴ τοῦτο δυνατόν, μέμφεσθαι προχείρως [προσήκει] πάλιν ἀξιοῦσι μηδὲν διαφέρειν ταῦτα ἐκείνων, τό τε κακὸν μὴ νομίζειν ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ ἐνδεέστερον εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ ἔλαττον ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀεὶ πρὸς τὸ σμικρότερον· οἷον εἴ τις τὴν φύσιν κακὸν λέγοι, ὅτι μὴ αἴσθησίς ἐστι, καὶ τὸ αἰσθητικόν, ὅτι μὴ λόγος. εἰ δὲ μή, κἀκεῖ τὰ κακὰ ἀναγκασθήσονται λέγειν εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ψυχὴ χεῖρον νοῦ καὶ οὗτος ἄλλου ἔλαττον.*

But the contradiction with Plotinus goes even deeper. Once embarked on this current of thought it seems scarcely possible to attribute either to νοῦς or ψυχή even a *proper* perfection. Leaving the moral point of view out of the question, naturalistically and by their own confession they are not self-satisfied hypostases. They themselves feel themselves to be imperfect, quite apart from any judgment we may pass upon them. The end of psychic activity turns out to be not the preservation, but the transcendence of its proper characteristics. In like manner the ultimate goal of intellectual vision is not the contemplation and conservation of truth, but a passing beyond it to ecstatic consciousness of the One. There only is truly beatific vision enjoyed.[1] From this point of view the whole universe instead of finding its essential function in the realization and illustration of all possible forms and degrees of existence, would seem to do this only accidentally in a ceaseless, and as ceaselessly frustrated, attempt in which its proper operation consists, to transcend and annihilate itself by absorption into deity. To reconcile statements and implications like these with the epithets like οὐκ ἐνδεές, "not lacking," τέλειον, "perfect," and θεῖον, "divine," which he is constantly using not only of νοῦς and ψυχή, but of the universe as well, is impossible.

[1] Cf. vi. 9, §§ 3-4 (760-762) [vol. ii. p. 512, l. 23]; cf. i. 6, § 7 (55). 4. *γίνεται δὲ ἡ ἀπορία μάλιστα, ὅτι μηδὲ κατ' ἐπιστήμην ἡ σύνεσις ἐκείνου μηδὲ κατὰ νόησιν, ὥσπερ τὰ ἄλλα νοητά, ἀλλὰ κατὰ παρουσίαν ἐπιστήμης κρείττονα.*

The confusion involved is indeed extraordinary. It is not merely a straightforward contradiction of the moral and the mechanical points of view, but of these cross-eyed. For Mind and Soul behold themselves as both perfect and imperfect with both eyes, but the two eyes are never focussed so as to agree. If they see themselves naturalistically as perfect after their kind, they are kept from the just fruits of that vision by the moral point of view which declares their perfections to be relatively imperfect. If with the moral eye they perceive and desire to transcend their relatively imperfect state, the naturalistic eye at once shows them their essential and proper excellence. Each point of view, in a word, may take either point of view, provided only it contradicts the other, and thereby stultifies itself.

We have then to leave the question of metaphysical evil in the Plotinian theodicy unsettled. We can only say of it that we find a pair of counter-influences at work. On the one hand there is a strong inclination, inherited perhaps from the Stoics, to admit the principle of a variety of perfections and to justify things as excellent after their kind. On the other hand there is not only the same attempt that we find in Plato and Aristotle to compare different kinds of excellence in point of excellence, but also a decided mystic tendency to deny all kinds of excellence save one, and to regard all other kinds as mere grades of imperfection in comparison with it. These tendencies are contradictory, and no result can

be expected from their conflict. Now one, now the other is uppermost in his mind, now both present themselves with equal strength. The result is that not only as regards the question of metaphysical evil is he undetermined and self-contradictory, but throughout his treatment of our problem we shall find solutions proffered of widely different antecedents and of contrary interests and implications.

We pass now to a series of arguments of considerable affinity to what we have called the "naturalistic point of view," and probably not unconnected historically with a very similiar reasoning on the part of the Stoics. From this point of view, as we have seen, we are to admit varieties or kinds of perfection, no one of which is to be blamed because it is itself and not another. The use to which this thought might be put in a theodicy is plain. If our opponent impugned the goodness and power of the Creator on the ground that he had created an imperfect world, which was but a poor and deficient copy of his thought, we might reply that we could not expect the world to be the same as God, nor the copy identical with the original. All that we can justly demand for it, or from the divine goodness, is that the created shall be perfect with the perfection appropriate to itself. And this, we might perhaps add, is the case.

At any rate this is the thesis which Plotinus opposes to the Gnostics, to refute their allegation that the world is evil and its Creator bad. The point at issue, indeed, concerned him more deeply

than we might at first suppose. In spite of his opposition to the Gnostics his system had much in common with their doctrine. Their tenets might almost be called a fantastic version of all that was mystic in his own thought. Out of the depths of a superintelligible, superessential, and superexistential God there proceeds a λόγος or νοῦς which develops itself into a kind of intelligible world in the shape of a Pleroma of Aeons. One of the lowest of these Aeons, Sophia, actuated like Eve, by a τόλμα or audacity, conceives the desire to know the unknowable God, and becomes thereby involved in discontent and passion. This passion receives a semi-separate hypostasis, called Achamoth, or the lesser Sophia. The passible nature and the discontent of Sophia-Achamoth exclude her from the world of Aeons, which is apparently self-sufficient and self-satisfied, and she finds herself in the Kenoma or Void, symbol of her dissatisfaction, and substratum of Matter. The divine power, however, takes pity upon her. Jesus or Christ, an Aeon in whom the perfections of all the others are combined, descends to her, and awakens within her a memory of the Pleroma. There takes place within her an ἐπιστροφή towards the Aeons, and she now seeks to make their images visible in the darkness of the Kenoma. She becomes creative, brings forth the Demiurge, and through him forms the material world. But the desire for and the necessity of creation are not expressive of her proper essence, but result from the fall due to

her audacity and her discontent with herself. Her formative activity, then, is a mark not of a perfection within herself, but of a want and imperfection, and what she forms is, in Platonic terms, twice removed from Truth and Being, the image of an image, the shadow of a dream.

Below the world of Aeons, then, we may distinguish three grades of Being, Sophia-Achamoth, the Demiurge, and Matter. This tripartite division is reflected in the universe in a trinity of worlds, celestial, planetary, and terrestrial, and in mankind in a trinity of principles, spirit, soul, and body. According as one or another principle is predominant, men are "pneumatic," "psychic," or "hylic." The moral life consists in an abjuration of all things of the world, and in development of the "pneumatic" principle. In the end, the redeemed will be transported to a new world, called the Paradigm, and the present universe, of which Achamoth has repented, will be consumed by fire and annihilated.[1]

Strip this of its fantastic wording and we seem to be on familiar Plotinian ground. Between the Gods of the two systems there is no essential difference; and the Gnostic *Pleroma* is, for our purposes at least, the same as the Plotinian *νοῦς*. The lapse of Sophia into Sophia-Achamoth is parallel to the emanatory

[1] Cf. Bouillet, *Les Ennéades de Plotin*, i. p. 499 *et seq.* Schmidt, *Über Plotins Stellung zum Gnosticismus*, etc., p. 36 in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des altchristlichen Litteratur*, Gebhardt und Harnack, vol. v. Vacherot, *op. cit.* bk. ii. ch. 4, vol. i. p. 201 *et seq.* The above résumé is of the system of Valentinus.

operation of νοῦς from which ψυχή proceeds, her ἐπιστροφή to that backward look to νοῦς by which ψυχή is confirmed and determined in her essence and guided in her operations, and the birth of the Demiurge to that emanatory act of ψυχή which creates the world. So, too, the Plotinian man is body, soul, and intellect: and the end of the moral life is to rise stage by stage to a re-absorption in the One, a process which involves for the redeemed soul the annihilation of its universe. We are, in fine, in a Plotinian wonderland where everything we meet is a satire on the Plotinian system. And the sting is keenest, perhaps, in that beneath its grotesqueness the satire is more logical than the thought it caricatures.

For whatever the vagaries of Gnosticism, its mysticism was not cross-eyed and could look one almost squarely in the face. To have been perfectly logical, it is true, the incidence of Evil should have taken place at the first stage of the process of emanation, when the Divine Silence was broken and the Pleroma emerged. Moreover, the account of the passion and fall of Sophia is full of wild and contradictory rumours. Still the implications of a theory in which Being issues from a higher, superexistential source, and lapses from one degree to another of fulness, till at length it is spent and lost in nothingness, are on the whole honestly faced. Below the Pleroma, at any rate, the true implication of *degrees* of perfection is realized; that is, that the expression is merely a euphemism for degrees of

imperfection. And again, the Gnostics rightly laid stress on the discontented and provisional nature of the activities hypostasized in ψυχή and Sophia-Achamoth: a nature to whose essential characteristics Plotinus himself could not be altogether blinded in spite of his endeavour to save its excellence by a misapplication to it of the principle of varieties of perfection. Sophia-Achamoth, despite her name, is a more consistent hypostasis than ψυχή. Finally, the Gnostics were logical in their vituperation of the world. The universe was for them the last respite of Being, the last glimmer of the divine light, before all died away in Not-being and darkness. Its existence was a metaphysical evil, the result of a lapse from perfection. The sooner it was repented of and destroyed, and anything saved from the wreck translated to happier realms, the better.

This should have been Plotinus's attitude also. But as we have remarked before, a natural optimism and a heritage of healthy Hellenism and Stoic philosophy kept him from this easy and logical conclusion. So far as we may judge, he loved Nature and human life with the love not merely of an energetic and versatile man of many interests and activities, but with something of that religious reverence for the universal whole which actuated Zeno and Marcus Aurelius and Seneca, and of that regard for living as the finest of all arts which we find in the older Greeks. Logic or no logic, it was temperamentally impossible for him to feel that Nature was essentially vile, the

body necessarily foul, and human life under corporeal conditions absolutely and unavoidably evil.

He had, then, to summon every argument to his aid to support his conviction. More was at stake than the defence of a world one loved against calumniation. The possibility of conceiving the process of emanation as anything but a process of degeneration was the broad and vital issue. More especially he had to protect the integrity and perfection of ψυχή against the dangers incidental to her outer resemblance to the abandoned Sophia. To this end three things were necessary. He had in the first place to show that the procession of ψυχή from νοῦς could not be regarded as in any way a fall. In the second place he must needs demonstrate that the operation by which ψυχή creates the world is not accidental, but essential, and that her proper perfection is not disturbed or her nature impaired thereby. And finally he had to show that the world so created was of sufficient excellence not to impede her operations or contaminate her nature by its contact and commerce with her. The first two of these points we may leave till we come to the discussion of the broader issue defined above. The third is that which must engage our attention now. To establish it, what more natural, as has been said, than to appeal to the old principle already used to Plotinus's satisfaction, and to declare that the universe in its wholeness is perfect after its kind?

"He who finds fault with the nature of the

universe does not know what he does, nor whither his arrogance is leading him. The reason is that men know not the successive orders of Being, first, second, third, and so on eternally, till the last be reached. . . . We must not ask that all animate beings shall be [equally] good, nor thoughtlessly complain because this is impossible. For that is to reiterate the demand that there shall be no difference between the sensible and intelligible worlds, and that Evil is to be regarded as identical with that which is lacking in wisdom and is a lesser good and ever tends towards the lower degree of perfection—which is like calling Nature evil because she is not perception, and the faculty of perception evil because it is not reasoning, in which case we should be forced to say that Evil exists even in the intelligible realm. For even there Soul is less perfect than Mind, Mind than the One."[1] Again, "we

[1] ii. 9, § 13 (211-212) [vol. i. p. 202, l. 10–p. 203, l. 14]. 13. *ὁ ἄρα μεμφόμενος τῇ τοῦ κόσμου φύσει οὐκ οἶδεν ὅ τι ποιεῖ, οὐδ' ὅποι τὸ θράσος αὐτοῦ τοῦτο χωρεῖ. τοῦτο δέ, ὅτι οὐκ ἴσασι τάξιν ἐφεξῆς πρώτων καὶ δευτέρων καὶ τρίτων καὶ ἀεὶ μέχρι τῶν ἐσχάτων, καὶ ὡς οὐ λοιδορητέον τοῖς χείροσι τῶν πρώτων, ἀλλὰ πρᾴως συγχωρητέον τῇ πάντων φύσει αὐτὸν θέοντα πρὸς τὰ πρῶτα παυσάμενον τῆς τραγῳδίας τῶν φοβερῶν, ὡς οἴονται, ἐν ταῖς τοῦ κόσμου σφαίραις, αἳ δὴ πάντα μείλιχα τεύχουσιν αὐτοῖς· τί γὰρ φοβερὸν ἔχουσιν αὗται, ὡς φοβοῦσι τοὺς ἀπείρους λόγων καὶ πεπαιδευμένης ἀνηκόους καὶ ἐμμελοῦς γνώσεως; οὐ γάρ, εἰ πύρινα τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν, φοβεῖσθαι δεῖ συμμέτρως πρὸς τὸ πᾶν καὶ πρὸς τὴν γῆν ἔχοντα, εἰς δὲ τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν βλέπειν, αἷς καὶ αὐτοὶ δήπουθεν ἀξιοῦσι τίμιοι εἶναι. καίτοι καὶ τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν μεγέθει καὶ κάλλει διαφέροντα συμπράττοντα καὶ συνενεργοῦντα τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν γιγνομένοις, ἃ οὐκ ἂν οὐ γένοιτό ποτε ἔστ' ἂν ᾖ τὰ πρῶτα, συμπληροῦντα δὲ τὸ πᾶν καὶ μεγάλα μέρη ὄντα τοῦ παντός. εἰ δὲ ἄνθρωποι τιμιόν τι παρ' ἄλλα ζῷα, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ταῦτα οὐ τυραννίδος ἕνεκα ἐν τῷ παντὶ ὄντα, ἀλλὰ κόσμον καὶ τάξιν παρέχοντα. ἃ δὲ*

must not admit that this universe has been ill created simply because it contains many unpleasant things. We shall be ascribing to it a degree of dignity greater than its conditions demand if we ask that it shall be the same as the intelligible world, rather than an image of it. And what fairer image of it could there have been?"[1] "No one can rightly blame the constitution of the universe, which displays pre-eminently the greatness of the intelligible nature. For if the universe has come into existence endowed not with an inarticulate life (like that of the smaller parts, which are generated within it continually, day and night, from the fulness of its own life), but gifted on the contrary with a continuous, clear, full, and omnipresent life, in which a fathomless wisdom is displayed, how can it be denied that it is a clear and beautiful image of the gods in their intelligible world? That, being a copy, it is not the original, is but natural, for otherwise it would no longer be a copy. But that it is an unfaithful copy is false, for nothing has been

λέγεται γίνεσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν σημεῖα νομίζειν τῶν ἐσομένων εἶναι, γίνεσθαι δὲ τὰ γινόμενα διάφορα καὶ τύχαις—οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε ἦν ταὐτὰ περὶ ἑκάστους συμβαίνειν—καὶ καιροῖς γενέσεων καὶ τόποις πλεῖστον ἀφεστηκόσι καὶ διαθέσεσι ψυχῶν. καὶ οὐκ ἀπαιτητέον πάλιν ἀγαθοὺς πάντας, οὐδ' ὅτι μὴ τοῦτο δυνατόν, μέμφεσθαι προχείρως [προσήκει] πάλιν ἀξιοῦσι μηδὲν διαφέρειν ταῦτα ἐκείνων, τό τε κακὸν μὴ νομίζειν ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ ἐνδεέστερον εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ ἔλαττον ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀεὶ πρὸς τὸ σμικρότερον· οἷον εἴ τις τὴν φύσιν κακὸν λέγοι, ὅτι μὴ αἴσθησίς ἐστι, καὶ τὸ αἰσθητικόν, ὅτι μὴ λόγος. εἰ δὲ μή, κἀκεῖ τὰ κακὰ ἀναγκασθήσονται λέγειν εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ψυχὴ χεῖρον νοῦ καὶ οὗτος ἄλλου ἔλαττον.

[1] ii. 9, § 4 (202 D) [vol. i. p. 188, ll. 20-23]. οὐδὲ τὸ κακῶς γεγονέναι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον δοτέον τῷ πολλὰ εἶναι ἐν αὐτῷ δυσχερῆ· τοῦτο γὰρ ἀξίωμα μεῖζόν ἐστι περιτιθέντων αὐτῷ, εἰ ἀξιοῦσι τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι τῷ νοητῷ, ἀλλὰ μὴ εἰκόνα ἐκείνου. ἢ τίς ἂν ἐγένετο ἄλλη καλλίων εἰκὼν ἐκείνου;

omitted of which it was possible to have a beautiful image in the realm of nature. It was necessary that the copy should not be the result of thought and contrivance; for the Intelligible could not be the last degree of Being. Its activity had to be twofold: part within itself and part acting upon something else. So it was necessary that there should be something after it. Only the most impotent of things is such that it gives nothing of itself to what is below it. . . .

"If, then, there is no other world superior in grade to this, what is this world? If, on the other hand, there must of necessity be such a [superior] world, and there is yet no other in existence than this, it must be this world which preserves the copy of the Intelligible.[1] . . . A man must indeed be indolent and apathetic if, seeing all the beautiful things in the sensible world, the complete symmetry, this great

[1] ii. 9, § 8 (206 B 206 E) [vol. i. p. 194, l. 7 *et seq.*]. *ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ τοῦ παντὸς τὴν διοίκησιν ὀρθῶς ἄν τις μέμψαιτο πρῶτον μὲν ἐνδεικνυμένην τῆς νοητῆς φύσεως τὸ μέγεθος. εἰ γὰρ οὕτως εἰς τὸ ζῆν παρελήλυθεν, ὡς μὴ ζωὴν ἀδιάρθρωτον ἔχειν—ὁποῖα τὰ σμικρότερα τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἃ τῇ πολλῇ ζωῇ τῇ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀεὶ νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν γεννᾶται —ἀλλ' ἔστι συνεχὴς καὶ ἐναργὴς καὶ πολλὴ καὶ πανταχοῦ ζωὴ σοφίαν ἀμήχανον ἐνδεικνυμένη, πῶς οὐκ ἄν τις ἄγαλμα ἐναργὲς καὶ καλὸν τῶν νοητῶν θεῶν εἴποι; εἰ δὲ μιμούμενον μή ἐστιν ἐκεῖνο, αὐτὸ τοῦτο κατὰ φύσιν ἔχει· οὐ γὰρ ἦν [ἂν] ἔτι μιμούμενον. τὸ δὲ ἀνομοίως μεμιμῆσθαι ψεῦδος· οὐδὲν γὰρ παραλέλειπται ὧν οἷόν τε ἦν καλὴν εἰκόνα φυσικὴν ἔχειν. ἀναγκαῖον μὲν γὰρ ἦν εἶναι οὐκ ἐκ διανοίας καὶ ἐπιτεχνήσεως τὸ μίμημα· οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε ἦν ἔσχατον τὸ νοητὸν εἶναι. εἶναι γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἐνέργειαν ἔδει διττήν, τὴν μὲν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, τὴν δὲ εἰς ἄλλο. ἔδει οὖν εἶναί τι μετ' αὐτό· ἐκείνου γὰρ μόνου οὐδέν ἐστιν ἔτι πρὸς τὸ κάτω, ὃ τῶν πάντων ἀδυνατώτατόν ἐστι. δύναμίς δὲ θαυμαστὴ ἐκεῖ θεῖ· ὥστε καὶ εἰργάσατο. εἰ μὲν δὴ ἄλλος κόσμος [οὐκ] ἔστι τούτου ἀμείνων, τίς οὗτος; εἰ δὲ ἀνάγκη εἶναι ἄλλος δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸ μίμημα ἀποσώζων ἐκείνου.*

ordered whole, and the form that is apparent in the stars, distant though they are, he lays not these things to heart, nor reverences them for what they are and whence they spring. Such a man has neither pondered upon the sensible world, nor known the supersensible."[1]

The same point also is brought out in the first of the two books on Providence.[2] We should not expect the sensible world to be the intelligible world. "Suppose, for example, we were contemplating man, the sensible object, in his most beautiful form, we would not surely demand that he should be the same as the archetypal man in the intelligible world. On the contrary we should accept it gladly of the Creator that he had endowed man, for all that he was embodied in flesh and sinew and bone, with reason, so that he beautified even these carnal things and made it possible for Reason to pass over into Matter."[3] In like manner we must look upon our physical world, "not seeking among the things which are second in rank, those which are first. . . ."[4]

[1] ii. 9, § 16 (215 E-F) [vol. i. p. 208, l. 9 *et seq.*]. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἰδὼν κάλλος ἐν προσώπῳ εὖ μεμιμημένον φέρεται ἐκεῖ, ἀργὸς δέ τις οὕτως ἔσται τὴν γνώμην καὶ εἰς οὐδὲν ἄλλο κινήσεται, ὥστε ὁρῶν σύμπαντα μὲν τὰ ἐν αἰσθητῷ κάλλη, σύμπασαν δὲ συμμετρίαν καὶ τὴν μεγάλην εὐταξίαν ταύτην καὶ τὸ ἐμφαινόμενον ἐν τοῖς ἄστροις εἶδος καὶ πόρρωθεν οὖσιν οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν ἐνθυμηθήσεται, καὶ σέβας αὐτὸν λαμβάνει, οἷα ἀφ' οἵων; οὐκ ἄρα οὔτε ταῦτα κατενόησεν, οὔτε ἐκεῖνα εἶδεν.

[2] iii. 2, 3.

[3] iii. 2, § 7 (260) [vol. i. p. 234, l. 17 *et seq.*]. οἷον, εἴ τις ἐσκόπει τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν αἰσθητὸν ὅστις κάλλιστος, οὐκ ἂν δήπου τῷ ἐν νῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἠξίωσε τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο ἀποδεδέχθαι τοῦ ποιητοῦ, εἰ ὅμως ἐν σαρξὶ καὶ νεύροις καὶ ὀστέοις ὄντα κατέλαβε τῷ λόγῳ, ὥστε καὶ ταῦτα καλλῦναι καὶ τὸν λόγον δυνηθῆναι ἐπανελθεῖν τῇ ὕλῃ.

[4] iii. 2, § 7.

"The intelligible world is purely conceptual and there could be no other that was purely conceptual. Anything else that has come into being must be lower than the intelligible world, and not conceptual; and yet not purely material, for that is without order; rather is it a mixture of both. . . .

". . . We cannot then rightly find fault with this universe of ours either on the score that it is not beautiful, or that it is not the best of corporeal things. Nor can we blame the Cause of its existence. For in the first place it exists as the result of necessity: not as the outcome of deliberate reasoning, but of a more excellent nature procreating in accordance with its nature something resembling itself. Secondly, even if deliberate reasoning were the creator, it would not be ashamed of its creation. For it would have made a whole in all respects beautiful, self-sufficient, and pleasing to itself, displaying similar fitness in its parts, both the greater and the lesser. . . . Since what has been made is the world in its entirety, we might, as we contemplated it, hear it say: 'God made me, and I am come from him, perfectly fashioned out of all living beings, sufficing and sufficient unto myself, in want of nothing. For all things—plants and living creatures and the natures of all created things, and many gods, and hosts of spirits and good souls and men blest with virtue—all are in me. It is not as though earth were decked with all plants and living beings of every kind, and the power of Soul reached even to the sea, whilst all

the air, and the upper air, and the whole firmament of heaven were without Soul, but there, in the celestial spheres, do all good souls dwell. They give life to the stars, and to the well-ordered eternal revolution of the heaven which circles ever joyfully in the same course in imitation of Mind; for beyond that it seeks nothing. Whatever is in me desires the Good, and each thing attains it so far as in it lies. The whole heaven depends upon it, and all my soul, and the gods that are in my parts, and all living creatures and plants, and even that which seems inanimate. . . .'"[1]

[1] iii. 2, § 2 (256) [vol. i. p. 228, l. 27 *et seq.*]. ὁ μὲν γὰρ νοητὸς μόνον λόγος, καὶ οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἄλλος μόνον λόγος· εἰ δέ τι ἐγένετο ἄλλο, ἔδει ἔλαττον ἐκείνου καὶ μὴ λόγον, μηδ' αὖ ὕλην εἶναι· ἄκοσμον γάρ· μικτὸν ἄρα. καὶ εἰς ἃ μὲν λήγει ὕλη καὶ λόγος, ὅθεν δὲ ἄρχεται ψυχὴ ἐφεστῶσα τῷ μεμιγμένῳ, ἣν οὐ κακοπαθεῖν δεῖ νομίζειν ῥᾳστα διοικοῦσαν τόδε τὸ πᾶν τῇ οἷον παρουσίᾳ. 3. καὶ οὐκ ἄν τις εἰκότως οὐδὲ τούτῳ μέμψαιτο ὡς οὐ καλῷ ἢ τῶν μετὰ σώματος οὐκ ἀρίστῳ, οὐδ' αὖ τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ εἶναι αὐτῷ αἰτιάσαιτο πρῶτον μὲν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὄντος αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐκ λογισμοῦ γενομένου, ἀλλὰ φύσεως ἀμείνονος γεννώσης κατὰ φύσιν ὅμοιον ἑαυτῇ· ἔπειτα οὐδ' εἰ λογισμὸς εἴη ὁ ποιήσας, αἰσχυνεῖται τῷ ποιηθέντι· ὅλον γάρ τι ἐποίησε πάγκαλον καὶ αὔταρκες καὶ φίλον αὐτῷ καὶ τοῖς μέρεσι τοῖς αὐτοῦ τοῖς τε κυριωτέροις καὶ τοῖς ἐλάττοσιν ὡς αὐτῷ προσφόροις. ὁ τοίνυν ἐκ τῶν μερῶν τὸ ὅλον αἰτιώμενος ἄτοπος ἂν εἴη τῆς αἰτίας· τά τε γὰρ μέρη πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον δεῖ σκοπεῖν, εἰ σύμφωνα καὶ ἁρμόττοντα ἐκείνῳ, τό τε ὅλον σκοπούμενον μὴ πρὸς μέρη ἄττα σμικρὰ βλέπειν. τοῦτο γὰρ οὐ τὸν κόσμον αἰτιωμένου, ἀλλά τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ χωρὶς λαβόντος, οἷον εἰ παντὸς ζῴου τρίχα ἢ τῶν χαμαὶ δάκτυλον ἀμελήσας τὸν πάντα ἄνθρωπον, δαιμονίαν τινὰ ὄψιν, βλέποι, ἢ νὴ Δία τὰ ἄλλα ζῷα ἀφεὶς τὸ εὐτελέστατον λαμβάνοι, ἢ τὸ ὅλον γένος παρείς, οἷον τὸ ἀνθρώπου, Θερσίτην εἰς μέσον ἄγοι. ἐπεὶ οὖν τὸ γενόμενον ὁ κόσμος ἐστὶν ὁ σύμπας, τοῦτον θεωρῶν τάχ' ἂν ἀκούσαις παρ' αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἐμὲ πεποίηκε θεὸς κἀγὼ ἐκεῖθεν ἐγενόμην τέλειος ἐκ πάντων ζῴων καὶ ἱκανὸς ἐμαυτῷ καὶ αὐτάρκης οὐδενὸς δεόμενος, ὅτι πάντα ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ φυτὰ καὶ ζῷα καὶ συμπάντων τῶν γεννητῶν φύσις καὶ θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ δαιμόνων δῆμοι

Finally, in discussing the descent of the soul into the body, the perfection of the universe is maintained in direct argument for the excellence of ψυχή. We must inquire, says Plotinus, "what we are to postulate with regard to the nature of the universe in which the soul dwells—whether her in-dwelling be voluntary, forced, or brought about in some other way. Also what are we to say of its creator (the World-Soul)? Does she act without deviation . . . or does she perhaps act like our souls, which must needs direct bodies worse than themselves and sink deep into them if they are to rule them? For each separate body is scattered and borne away to its own place, whereas in the universe all things lie naturally in their proper places. Again, these bodies of ours, since many accidents befall them from without, need much troublesome forethought; they are ever hard pressed by want and in their difficulties need all kinds of help. But the body of the universe, perfect, self-sufficient, independent, and suffering nothing contrary to its nature, needs, so to speak, but a brief word of command; and its state is ever in

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καὶ ψυχαὶ ἀγαθαὶ καὶ ἄνθρωποι ἀρετῇ εὐδαίμονες. οὐ γὰρ δὴ γῆ μὲν κεκόσμηται φυτοῖς τε πᾶσι καὶ ζῴοις παντοδαποῖς καὶ μέχρι θαλάττης ψυχῆς ἦλθε δύναμις, ἀὴρ δὲ πᾶς καὶ αἰθὴρ καὶ οὐρανὸς σύμπας ψυχῆς ἄμοιρος, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ ψυχαὶ ἀγαθαὶ πᾶσαι, ἄστροις ζῶν διδοῦσαι καὶ τῇ εὐτάκτῳ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἀιδίῳ περιφορᾷ νοῦ μιμήσει κύκλῳ φερομένῃ ἐμφρόνως περὶ ταὐτὸν ἀεί· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔξω ζητεῖ. πάντα δὲ τὰ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐφίεται μὲν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, τυγχάνει δὲ κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστα· ἐξήρτηται γὰρ πᾶς μὲν οὐρανὸς ἐκείνου, πᾶσα δὲ ἐμὴ ψυχὴ καὶ οἱ ἐν μέρεσιν ἐμοῖς θεοί, καὶ τὰ ζῷα δὲ πάντα καὶ τὰ φυτὰ καὶ εἴ τι ἄψυχον δοκεῖ εἶναι ἐν ἐμοί.

accordance with the natural wish of the Soul, having neither desires nor sufferings."[1]

But the position thus set forth was capable of further extension and reinforcement. The argument could be developed from within as well as applied from without. The perfection which it was possible to predicate of the universe *en bloc*, could be predicated of it regarded as a collection of genera and species. Not only was the universe perfect after its kind, but every kind of thing within the universe could be regarded as possessing its peculiar and appropriate excellence. Each genus then would be justified in its existence, and none could with propriety be blamed because it was not other than it was. It would be as unfair and irrelevant, for instance, to find fault with man because he was not an angel, or with a plant because it was not an animal, as to reproach the universe with being mundane and not psychic or intelligible.

[1] iv. 8, § 2 (470) [vol. ii. p. 144, l. 9 *et seq.*]. 2. ὥστε ἡμῖν συμβαίνει περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς παρ' αὐτοῦ μαθεῖν ζητήσασιν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐφάπτεσθαι καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς ὅλως ζητῆσαι, πῶς ποτε κοινωνεῖν σώματι πέφυκε, καὶ περὶ κόσμου φύσεως οἷόν τινα δεῖ αὐτὸν τίθεσθαι. ἐν ᾧ ψυχὴ ἐνδιαιτᾶται [εἴτε] ἑκοῦσα εἴτε ἀναγκασθεῖσα εἴτε τις ἄλλος τρόπος· καὶ περὶ ποιητοῦ δὲ εἴτε ὀρθῶς εἴτε . . . ὡς ἡμέτεραι ψυχαὶ οὖσαι ἴσως, ἃς ἔδει σώματα διοικούσας χείρω δι' αὐτῶν εἴσω πολὺ δῦναι, εἴπερ ἔμελλον κρατήσειν, σκεδασθέντος μὲν ἂν ἑκάστου καὶ πρὸς τὸν οἰκεῖον τόπον φερομένου—ἐν δὲ τῷ παντὶ πάντα ἐν οἰκείῳ κατὰ φύσιν κεῖται—πολλῆς δὲ καὶ ὀχλώδους προνοίας δεομένων, ἅτε πολλῶν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων αὐτοῖς προσπιπτόντων ἀεί τε ἐνδείᾳ συνεχομένων καὶ πάσης βοηθείας ὡς ἐν πολλῇ δυσχερείᾳ δεομένων. τὸ δὲ τέλειόν τε ὂν καὶ ἱκανὸν καὶ αὔταρκες καὶ οὐδὲν ἔχον αὐτῷ παρὰ φύσιν βραχέος οἷον κελεύσματος δεῖται· καὶ ὡς πέφυκε ψυχὴ ἐθέλειν, ταύτῃ καὶ ἀεὶ ἔχει οὔτε ἐπιθυμίας ἔχουσα οὔτε πάσχουσα.

This is the line pursued by Plotinus. His universe continues the eloquent defence of itself quoted above as follows: "Some of the things within me seem to share only in existence, some in life, some in sensation, while others have already reason, and others again life in its completeness. For one cannot make equality from unequal things, as that the finger should see. Sight we rather ask of the eye, and of the finger something else, namely, that it should be a finger, I suppose, and have its proper nature."[1]

But Plotinus is not content merely to be on the defensive. Not only will he hold his own position and maintain the excellence of the world in the face of all, Gnostic or otherwise, who dare to attack it, but he carries the war into the enemy's country as well, turning the Gnostics' arms against themselves, and using the *reductio ad absurdum* to their discomfiture.

"Is it not absurd that the Gnostics, who have bodies and desires and pains and passions like other men, should, instead of disparaging their own power, maintain their ability to comprehend the intelligible world, and yet deny that the sun possesses a power less subject to passion, more orderly and more free from change than their own, and that it has an

[1] iii. 2, § 3 (257 D *et seq.*) [vol. i. p. 230, l. 11 *et seq.*]. Cf. also iii. 3, § 3 (272) [vol. i. p. 253, l. 6 *et seq.*]. καὶ τὰ μὲν τοῦ εἶναι μετέχειν δοκεῖ μόνον, τὰ δὲ τοῦ ζῆν, τὰ δὲ μᾶλλον ἐν τῷ αἰσθάνεσθαι, τὰ δὲ ἤδη λόγον ἔχει, τὰ δὲ πᾶσαν ζωήν. οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἴσα ἀπαιτεῖν δεῖ τοῖς μὴ ἴσοις· οὐδὲ γὰρ δακτύλων τὸ βλέπειν ἀλλὰ ὀφθαλμῶν τοῦτο, δακτύλου δὲ ἄλλο, τὸ εἶναι οἶμαι δακτύλῳ καὶ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔχειν.

intelligence higher than that which we possess—we, new-born creatures who encounter so many obstacles on our march towards truth? Is it not astonishing that they should proclaim their own souls immortal and divine, however vile the man, and yet deny that the whole heaven and its stars, composed as they are of purer and finer elements, share in an immortal soul? And this, though they see in the heavens just that order and form and structure of the lack of which here on earth they are always complaining! What they imply is that the immortal soul has deliberately chosen to take the worse place for herself, and to abandon the better to the mortal soul."[1]

Do they deny that the world is directed by providence? No, they admit that God exercises some care over us men. "Why, then, should he be careless of the universe in which men dwell? Is it because he has not the leisure to look after it? Then it is not right that he should see to what is

[1] ii. 9, § 5 (202 F) [vol. i. p. 188, l. 30 *et seq.*]. 5. ἀλλ' [ἄλογον] αὐτοὺς μὲν σῶμα ἔχοντας, οἷον ἔχουσιν ἄνθρωποι, καὶ ἐπιθυμίας καὶ λύπας καὶ ὀργὰς τὴν παρ' αὐτοῖς δύναμιν μὴ ἀτιμάζειν, ἀλλ' ἐφάπτεσθαι τοῦ νοητοῦ λέγειν ἐξεῖναι, μὴ εἶναι δὲ ἐν ἡλίῳ ταύτης ἀπαθεστέραν ἐν τάξει μᾶλλον καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἀλλοιώσει μᾶλλον οὖσαν, οὐδὲ φρόνησιν ἔχειν ἀμείνονα ἡμῶν τῶν ἄρτι γενομένων καὶ διὰ τοσούτων κωλυομένων τῶν ἀπατώντων ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐλθεῖν· οὐδὲ τὴν μὲν αὐτῶν ψυχὴν ἀθάνατον καὶ θείαν λέγειν καὶ τὴν τῶν φαυλοτάτων ἀνθρώπων, τὸν δὲ οὐρανὸν πάντα καὶ τὰ ἐκεῖ ἄστρα μὴ τῆς ἀθανάτου κεκοινωνηκέναι ἐκ πολλῷ καλλιόνων καὶ καθαρωτέρων ὄντα, ὁρῶντας ἐκεῖ μὲν τὸ τεταγμένον καὶ εὔσχημον καὶ εὔτακτον καὶ μάλιστα τὴν ἐνταῦθα περὶ γῆν ἀταξίαν αὐτοὺς αἰτιωμένους· ὥσπερ τῆς ἀθανάτου ψυχῆς τὸν χείρω τόπον ἐπίτηδες ἑλομένης, παραχωρῆσαι δὲ τοῦ βελτίονος τῇ θνητῇ ψυχῇ ἑλομένης.

lower than it. If he looks after men, why should he not look beyond them to the world in which they are? But if he does not look beyond them so that he need not look after the world, then he does not even look after men. Men, they may say, have no need of him. But the world needs him, and knows its own constitution, and the men who are in it, and how they are in it, and their condition there."[1]

Again, "the Gnostics say that God takes forethought for them alone. Did he then care for them only in the higher world, or does his providence also extend to this? In the former case, how did the Gnostics come here? In the latter, why are they here still, and how is it that God himself is not here? For how else will he know that they are here, or that being here they have not forgotten him nor become evil? Again, if he knows those who have not become evil, he must also know those who have, in order to distinguish the one from the other. But in that case he will have to be present in some way among all men, and throughout this universe. Hence the universe must also have a share in him. . . ."[2]

[1] ii. 9, § 9 (208 D) [vol. i. p. 197, l. 27 *et seq.*]. *εἶτ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ὑμῶν προνοεῖ ὁ θεός, τοῦ δὲ κόσμου παντὸς ἐν ᾧ καὶ αὐτοὶ διὰ τί ἀμελεῖ; εἰ μὲν γάρ, ὅτι οὐ σχολὴ αὐτῷ πρὸς αὐτὸν βλέπειν οὐδὲ θέμις αὐτῷ, πρὸς τὸ κάτω καὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς βλέπων διὰ τί οὐκ ἔξω βλέπει καὶ πρὸς τὸν κόσμον δὲ βλέπει ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν; εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔξω, ἵνα μὴ τὸν κόσμον ἐφορᾷ, οὐδὲ αὐτοὺς βλέπει. ἀλλ' οὐδὲν δέονται αὐτοῦ· ἀλλ' ὁ κόσμος δεῖται καὶ οἶδε τὴν τάξιν αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτῷ ὅπως ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ὅπως ἐκεῖ.*

[2] ii. 9 (215 A) [vol. i. p. 207, l. 3 *et seq.*]. *λέγουσι γὰρ αὐτῶν προνοεῖν αὖ μόνον. πότερα δὲ ἐκεῖ γενομένων ἢ καὶ ἐνθάδε ὄντων; εἰ*

The final absurdity is this. "The Gnostics scorn this creation and this earth of ours, and say that a new earth has been created for them to which they will depart; this, they say, is the universe in intelligible form. But what is their object in getting to a world which is a mere pattern of this world which they hate? Also, where does this pattern come from? (For they say that it was after the creator of the pattern universe had stooped to this world of ours.) If indeed he was anxious to make another world besides the intelligible world he already possessed (though one may well ask what was the need of it), either he must have made it before or after he made this world. And if he made it before, for what purpose did he make it? That the souls might be kept safe in it, perhaps. How was it, then, that they were not safe? Thus he created it in vain. If, on the other hand, he created it after this world, taking it from this world, and stripping the form of this world from its matter, what good did it do? For the experience which the experienced souls had had was sufficient to keep them safe. Again, if the Gnostics merely mean that the form of the world

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μὲν γαρ ἐκεῖ, πῶς ἦλθον; εἰ δὲ ἐνθάδε, πῶς ἔτι εἰσὶν ἐνθάδε; πῶς δὲ οὐ καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἐνθάδε; πόθεν γὰρ γνώσεται, ὅτι εἰσὶν ἐνθάδε; πῶς δέ, ὅτι ἐνθάδε ὄντες οὐκ ἐπελάθοντο αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐγένοντο κακοί; εἰ δὲ γινώσκει τοὺς μὴ γενομένους κακούς, καὶ τοὺς γενομένους γινώσκει, ἵνα διακρίνῃ ἀπ' ἐκείνων αὐτούς. πᾶσιν οὖν παρέσται καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τῷδε, ὅστις ὁ τρόπος· ὥστε καὶ μεθέξει αὐτοῦ ὁ κόσμος.

is to be found in souls, what is there novel in that teaching? . . ."[1]

Moreover, given the Gnostic premises, what good was there in the soul's creating a world at all? "It is absurd to suppose that she did it for her own renown as though adopting the methods of an earthly sculptor. Again, if she created in thought, but it was not in her nature to create, although the creative power was there, how could she have created this world? And when will she destroy it? If she has repented, why does she delay? If she has not yet repented, she never will, since she has grown used to it and is more kindly disposed to it through the lapse of time."[2]

Again, the Gnostics condemning the world wholesale say that "they are not moved by its beauty,

[1] ii. 9, § 5 (203) [vol. i. p. 189, l. 23 *et seq.*]. ἀλλ' οὐ τιμῶντες ταύτην τὴν δημιουργίαν οὐδὲ τήνδε τὴν γῆν καινὴν αὐτοῖς φασι γῆν γεγονέναι, εἰς ἣν δὴ ἐντεῦθεν ἀπελεύσονται· τοῦτο δὲ λόγον εἶναι κόσμου. καίτοι τί δεῖ αὐτοῖς γενέσθαι ἐν παραδείγματι κόσμου, ὃν μισοῦσι; πόθεν δὲ τὸ παράδειγμα τοῦτο; τοῦτο γὰρ κατ' αὐτοὺς νενευκότος ἤδη πρὸς τὰ τῇδε τοῦ τὸ παράδειγμα πεποιηκότος. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ποιήσαντι πολλὴ φροντὶς τοῦ κόσμον μετὰ τὸν κόσμον τὸν νοητὸν ὃν ἔχει ἄλλον ποιῆσαι—καίτοι τί ἔδει;—[ἢ πρὸ τοῦ κόσμου τοῦδε ἐποίησεν ἢ μετὰ τὸν κόσμον]. καὶ εἰ μὲν πρὸ τοῦ κόσμου, ἵνα τί; ἵνα φυλάξωνται αἱ ψυχαί. πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἐφυλάξαντο, ὥστε μάτην ἐγένετο; εἰ δὲ μετὰ τὸν κόσμον ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου λαβὼν ἀποσυλήσας τῆς ὕλης τὸ εἶδος, ἤρκει ἡ πεῖρα ταῖς πειραθείσαις ψυχαῖς πρὸς τὸ φυλάξασθαι. εἰ δὲ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς λαβεῖν ἀξιοῦσι τοῦ κόσμου τὸ εἶδος, τί τὸ καινὸν τοῦ λόγου;

[2] ii. 9, § 4 (202) [vol. i. p. 188, l. 8 *et seq.*]. γελοῖον γὰρ τὸ ἵνα τιμῷτο, καὶ μεταφερόντων ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαλματοποιῶν τῶν ἐνταῦθα. ἐπεὶ καὶ εἰ διανοίᾳ ἐποίει καὶ μὴ ἐν τῇ φύσει ἦν τὸ ποιεῖν καὶ ἡ δύναμις ἡ ποιοῦσα ἦν, πῶς ἂν κόσμον τόνδε ἐποίησε; πότε δὲ καὶ φθερεῖ αὐτόν; εἰ γὰρ μετέγνω, τί ἀναμένει; εἰ δὲ οὔπω, οὐκ ἂν μεταγνοίη ἔτι ἤδη εἰθισμένη καὶ τῷ χρόνῳ προσφιλεστέρα γενομένη.

and that they see no difference between ugly and beautiful physical bodies. But in that case it will make no difference to them whether they see ugly or beautiful conduct, or have ugly or beautiful thoughts or visions. Nay, it will be all the same whether or no they see God himself. For things here derive their existence from first principles. If earthly things are not beautiful, then neither are heavenly."[1]

In like manner, in a world absolutely bad, all distinction between virtue and vice will be impossible. "Least of all," says Plotinus, "can we afford to ignore the effect of their words upon the souls of those who listen to them, and are persuaded to despise the world and all that is in it. For there are two sets of doctrines relating to the attainment of the End, the one which lays down the pleasure of the body as the End, the other which chooses out the beautiful and virtue; and the longing for these has its beginning and its end in God—but the nature of this desire we must discuss elsewhere. Epicurus, who does away with Providence, bids us pursue what is left, pleasure and enjoyment. But with even greater insolence the Gnostic teaching, by upbraiding the Lord of Providence and Providence itself, and by dishonouring both all earthly laws and the virtue collected from the beginning of time, makes

[1] ii. 9, § 17 (216) [vol. i. p. 209, l. 8 *et seq.*]. *εἰ μὴ ἄρα αὐτοὶ φαῖεν μὴ κινεῖσθαι, μηδὲ διαφόρως αἰσχρὰ καὶ καλὰ ὁρᾶν σώματα· ἀλλ' οὕτως οὐδὲ αἰσχρὰ καὶ καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα οὐδὲ καλὰ μαθήματα· οὐδὲ θεωρίας τοίνυν· οὐδὲ θεὸν τοίνυν. καὶ γὰρ διὰ τὰ πρῶτα ταῦτα. εἰ οὖν μὴ ταῦτα, οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνα.*

of virtuous wisdom a laughing-stock (so that nothing earthly may be regarded as beautiful) and destroys it, together with the goodness innate in moral characters, perfected from reason and discipline. In a word, the Gnostics do away with everything through which a man might become virtuous. Hence for them nothing is left but pleasure, and selfishness, and disregard for other men, and the principle of expediency, unless perchance some one of them is by virtue of his own nature superior to such doctrines. For to them none of the virtues of which we have spoken are beautiful, but now one thing, now another, according to the object of their pursuits. And although those who have known the higher things should strive hence towards them, yet they should first seek to set right the affairs of earth, since they have come hither from the divine nature. . . . The saying 'Look to God' brings no practical result unless it teach how one is to look to him. For, one may say, what is to prevent one's looking toward him, without abstaining from any pleasure or controlling desires, merely keeping in mind the word 'God,' but fettered by every passion and seeking to expel none? It is rather virtue progressing towards the End, and springing up in the soul as a result of wisdom, which shows us God. But without true virtue, the word 'God' is a mere name."[1]

[1] ii. 9, § 15 (213) [vol. i. p. 205, l. 3 *et seq.*]. 15. ἐκεῖνο δὲ μάλιστα δεῖ μὴ λανθάνειν ἡμᾶς, τί ποτε ποιοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι εἰς τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀκουόντων καὶ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ καταφρονεῖν πεισθέντων δυαῖν γὰρ οὐσῶν αἱρέσεων τοῦ τυχεῖν τοῦ τέλους, μιᾶς μὲν τῆς ἡδονὴν

Finally, Plotinus rebukes the Gnostic hatred of the body and the senses; at the same time refuting their charge that his doctrine attaches one to the flesh. In a charming passage, almost Franciscan in its sentiment, he points out the difference between himself and the Gnostic. "Suppose," he says, "two men dwell together in the same beautiful house. One of them decries its arrangement and blames its builder, yet continues to dwell in it. The other,

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τὴν τοῦ σώματος τέλος τιθεμένης, ἑτέρας δὲ τῆς τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν αἱρουμένης, οἷς καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ καὶ εἰς θεὸν ἀνήρτηται ἡ ὄρεξις—πῶς δέ, ἐν ἄλλοις θεωρητέον—ὁ μὲν Ἐπίκουρος τὴν πρόνοιαν ἀναιρῶν τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ τὸ ἥδεσθαι, ὅπερ ἦν λοιπόν, τοῦτο διώκειν παρακελεύεται· ὁ δὲ λόγος οὔτος ἔτι νεανικώτερον τὸν τῆς προνοίας κύριον καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν πρόνοιαν μεμψάμενος καὶ πάντας νόμους τοὺς ἐνταῦθα ἀτιμάσας καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τὴν ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ χρόνου ἀνηυρημένην τό τε σωφρονεῖν τοῦτο ἐν γέλωτι θέμενος, ἵνα μηδὲν καλὸν ἐνταῦθα δὴ ὀφθείη ὑπάρχον, ἀνεῖλε τὸ σωφρονεῖν καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἤθεσιν ἔμφυτον δικαιοσύνην τὴν τελειουμένην ἐκ λόγου καὶ ἀσκήσεως καὶ ὅλως καθ' ἃ σπουδαῖος ἄνθρωπος ἂν γένοιτο. ὥστε αὐτοῖς καταλείπεσθαι τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ τὸ περὶ αὐτοὺς καὶ τὸ οὐ κοινὸν πρὸς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους καὶ τὸ τῆς χρείας μόνον, εἰ μή τις τῇ φύσει τῇ αὐτοῦ κρείττων εἴη τῶν λόγων τούτων· τούτων γὰρ οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς καλόν, ἀλλὰ ἄλλο τι, ὅ ποτε μεταδιώξουσι. καίτοι ἐχρῆν τοὺς ἤδη θείας ἐγνωκότας ἐντεῦθεν διώκειν, διώκοντας δὲ πρῶτα κατορθοῦν ταῦτα ἐκ θείας φύσεως ἥκοντας· ἐκείνης γὰρ τῆς φύσεως καλὸν ἐπαίειν [τῆς] τὴν ἡδονὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀτιμαζούσης. οἷς δὲ ἀρετῆς μὴ μέτεστιν, οὐκ ἂν εἶεν τὸ παράπαν κινηθέντες πρὸς ἐκεῖνα. μαρτυρεῖ δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ τόδε τὸ μηδένα λόγον περὶ ἀρετῆς πεποιῆσθαι, ἐκλελοιπέναι δὲ παντάπασι τὸν περὶ τούτων λόγον, καὶ μήτε τί ἐστιν εἰπεῖν μήτε πόσα μήτε ὅσα τεθεώρηται πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ τοῖς τῶν παλαιῶν λόγοις, μήτε ἐξ ὧν περιέσται καὶ κτήσεται, μήτε ὡς θεραπεύεται ψυχὴ μήτε ὡς καθαίρεται. οὐ γὰρ δὴ τὸ εἰπεῖν "βλέπε πρὸς θεόν" προὔργου τι ἐργάζεται, ἐὰν μὴ καὶ πῶς βλέψει διδάξῃ. τί γὰρ κωλύει, εἴποι τις ἄν, βλέπειν καὶ μηδεμιᾶς ἀπέχεσθαι ἡδονῆς, ἢ ἀκρατῆ θυμοῦ εἶναι μεμνημένον μὲν ὀνόματος τοῦ θεός, συνεχόμενον δὲ ἅπασι πάθεσι, μηδὲν δὲ αὐτῶν πειρώμενον ἐξαιρεῖν; ἀρετὴ μὲν οὖν εἰς τέλος προιοῦσα καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ ἐγγενομένη μετὰ φρονήσεως θεὸν δείκνυσιν· ἄνευ δὲ ἀρετῆς ἀληθινῆς θεὸς λεγόμενος ὄνομά ἐστιν.

instead of finding fault, says that the builder has made it with all possible skill, yet waits for the time when he may leave it as needing it no longer. The first man may believe himself the wiser and the readier to leave because he has learned to say that the walls are made of lifeless stone and timber, and that the house as a whole falls far short of the true, ideal house. If so, he does not realize that he differs from his fellow-inmate only in his inability to bear with what must needs be, since his attitude is not really one of discontent, but comes from a secret love for the beauty of the stones. We who have bodies have to live in these houses provided us by our good sister the Soul who has great power to create without effort."[1]

This refutation of the Gnostics requires little comment. The tolerance of the body, we may note, stands in curious contrast not only to the vituperations of the Gnostics, but to the general trend of Neo-Platonic and Neo-Pythagorean thought. Plutarch, Maximus, Numenius, Albinus, Hermes,

[1] ii. 9, § 18 (217 B) [vol. i. p. 210, l. 20 *et seq.*]. *τοῦτο δὲ ὅμοιον ἂν εἴη, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ δύο οἶκον καλὸν τὸν αὐτὸν οἰκούντων, τοῦ μὲν ψέγοντος τὴν κατασκευὴν καὶ τὸν ποιήσαντα καὶ μένοντος οὐχ ἧττον ἐν αὐτῷ, τοῦ δὲ μὴ ψέγοντος, ἀλλὰ τὸν ποιήσαντα τεχνικώτατα πεποιηκέναι λέγοντος, τὸν δὲ χρόνον ἀναμένοντος ἕως ἂν ἥκῃ, ἐν ᾧ ἀπαλλάξεται, οὗ μηκέτι οἴκου δεήσοιτο, ὁ δὲ σοφώτερος εἶναι οἰοιτο καὶ ἑτοιμότερος ἐξελθεῖν, ὅτι οἶδε λέγειν ἐκ λίθων ἀψύχων τοὺς τοίχους καὶ ξύλων συνεστάναι καὶ πολλοῦ δεῖν τῆς ἀληθινῆς οἰκήσεως, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τῷ μὴ φέρειν τὰ ἀναγκαῖα διαφέρει, εἴπερ καὶ μὴ ποιεῖ ταῦτα δυσχεραίνων [ἀλλ'] ἀγαπῶν ἡσυχῇ τὸ κάλλος τῶν λίθων. δεῖ δὲ μένειν μὲν ἐν οἴκοις σῶμα ἔχοντας κατασκευασθεῖσιν ὑπὸ ψυχῆς ἀδελφῆς ἀγαθῆς πολλὴν δύναμιν εἰς τὸ δημιουργεῖν ἀπόνως ἐχούσης.*

Trismegistus, and Philo were almost as vehement in their denunciations. It should be remembered, however, that this scorn with them, as with their early Pythagorean and Orphic forbears, was largely philosophic. Theoretically it is easy to say that life is bad, and the body a loathsome dungeon. Practically it is liveable enough, and its bars well gilded. Nay the normal soul, like the canary-bird, is happy in its cage.

This Hellenic appreciation of the bodily is indeed inconsistent with a large part of Plotinus's thought, just as we find it hard to reconcile Saint Francis's joyfulness, his love of all creatures, and his tolerance and even approval of all natural pleasures and goods with much else in his life. The charm and the greatness of both men lie perhaps in just this inconsistency, in seraphic ardour and mystic ecstasy athirst for the supernatural and consecrated by the Beatific Vision and the Stigmata, tempered by and tempering an innate fellowship and sympathy with the life and beauty of phenomenal things, and a responsiveness to their appeal. Both, taken to task, give the same account of themselves. The world is not God indeed, but it is God's. In proof Francis points to it and says "Look," Plotinus points to it and says "Think."

As regards the metaphysical *reductio ad absurdum* of the Gnostic position, the self-contradictions exposed are patent enough. It is absurd for a man to think himself better than his universe. It is insanity

in a God to create, or for a creature to expect salvation and satisfaction in the replica or paradigm of a world which both he and its maker find so bad that both are agreed it had better never have been made, and would and will destroy it. Nor can either give any reason for creating or inhabiting such a world at all.

The practical and ethical nihilism of the argument is no less obvious. Plotinus is but showing the consequences of any consistent and absolute pessimism. Not only would such a pessimism, he is saying, destroy all canons of taste and morals, finding all earthly things and ends alike worthless, and all distinctions of value, ethical or aesthetic, meaningless (which indeed was precisely the Gnostic claim), but it would also leave equally without ground or justification that mystic aspiration toward the supercosmic upon which the Gnostics prided themselves — an aspiration which we are wont generally to regard as fostered by and fostering a scorn of the world.

Out of a strange and totally dark room no one could ever see the hint of a way; in truth it could never occur (leaving previous experience out of account) that a way existed or that there was light outside to search for. There would have to be some crack, some glimmer to indicate the existence and the position of the door. In like manner in a world wholly bad, in which all distinctions of right and wrong, beautiful and ugly are without significance,

the Gnostic's desire and attempt to find an egress are a mere blind man's groping. His world can give him no suggestion of the manner in which he must set about transcending it. Vice will be no less likely a way than virtue, because virtue is no better a way than vice.

The Gnostics then could not be true to themselves without being false. They could not wholly condemn the world if their desire to leave it behind them was to have any value or promise. The door out of the world had to open into the world. Moral and aesthetic distinctions had to have some real validity. Right and beauty had to be glimmers, however faint, of the light beyond. The moral life had to lie at least more in the direction of the path of salvation than the immoral. Fair things must needs be more worthy of esteem, or at any rate less worthy of contempt, than foul. God might be beyond all predicates, but beauty and goodness had to be more akin to his nature than their opposites.

As a matter of fact few mystics have denied this. They have had to admit some sort of ἀνάμνησις or homing instinct in the soul that recognized in the goods and beauties of this world sign-posts to set them on the upward and outward way. Sophia-Achamoth herself modelled the world on a memory of the Pleroma. And as a rule all mystic systems, however rotten they may consider the world and however illusory its goods, have made the practice of human virtues and the contemplation of the nobler mundane

beauties the first step in the ascent to the Beatific Vision. Plotinus himself is merely pointing out to the Gnostics what would be the consequences of their teaching, were they not better than their doctrine.

CHAPTER III

PHYSICAL AND MORAL EVIL

We have now completed what we may call the second chapter of our essay. The problem of metaphysical evil is disposed of, or rather the difficulties and unforeseen results of dealing with it are admirably exposed by Plotinus's attempt at disposing of them. The nature of that attempt, self-contradictory resultant as it is of the struggle of two irreconcilable tendencies of thought, is sufficiently fresh in our memory to require no reviving. Suffice it to say that Plotinus denies and affirms metaphysical evil at the same time, denying it by insisting on the possibility of different kinds of perfection, affirming it by declaring those kinds to be at the same time degrees. But whatever we may think, Plotinus found the two ideas consonant. Welded together, they seemed to him to furnish a powerful weapon against the objection stated by him in the first treatise concerning Providence, and already quoted, which it was the avowed intention of his theodicy to refute. To the contention that the imperfection of the world is sufficient ground for denying, as the Epicureans deny,

a moral and providential government of it, or for assuming, as the Gnostics assume, that the creation and creator are evil, Plotinus answers by denying the accusation, and thereby makes the first point in his theodicy. The world is not imperfect. It is, to be sure, not so good as God, but it is perfect after its kind.

This declaration, however, marks also the opening of another chapter in his work, and in our discussion. Plotinus has, in his own opinion, freed the universe from invidious comparisons on the part of the outside observer. Henceforth all external relations may be ruled out as irrelevant. The world is perfect of its sort, and all other possible sorts of perfection we may ignore, so far at least as any disparagement of mundane perfection is concerned. But an internal problem remained. Judged without reference to other possible worlds, this world as it was had to make good its proper excellence. It could not be blamed for not being something else, but apparently it could be attacked on the score that it was not true even to itself. Judged even by the standards of its own making, it might well appear imperfect. It is internally discordant. It does not run smoothly. Its parts fall short even of their proper excellences, and grind down and destroy one another. There is suffering and imperfection. In the world of human action there is sin. Such a world would seem to be diseased in its own essence, and to fail to embody even a mundane perfection.

In fine, having made the Stoic assertion that the universe is a perfect universe, Plotinus finds himself faced by the Stoic problem. It need not surprise us, then, to find in the two books concerning Providence, a theodicy in many respects similar to, and often actually reminiscent of, that of Zeno and his school. But at the same time this chapter of the Plotinian theodicy differs from that of the Stoics in one important respect. It is not Plotinus's last means of defence. It is rather a reconnoitre in force.

We shall do well in the discussion to follow if we revert to the distinctions discussed in the introduction, and regard our problem under the three heads of physical evil, moral evil, and the disproportion of reward to merit. These distinctions, of course, cannot be regarded as absolutely rigid and determinate. Many evidences of imperfection will fall under more than one head, and it will be hard to say under which they may be most appropriately discussed. At the most our headings will be found rough, but useful instruments for dealing more easily with our subject.

It should be remarked at this point that Plotinus's view of the nature of physical evil is notably broad and detached as compared with that taken by most theodicies. Many apologists for the divine goodness have an easy way of ignoring or of dismissing as irrelevant to the question such physical evil as does not immediately concern humanity. Of the general incompatibility of the types produced by nature, of

the stultification of one thing by another, of the battle-fields on which man does not fight and suffer, and of the tooth and claw that are red, but not with his blood, they take little practical account, though it must be insisted that such phenomena, quite as much as the fact of human suffering, form part of the problem of physical evil. It goes without saying that by thus evading part of the difficulty, one seems more easily to circumvent it. Thus the Stoics, by virtually limiting physical evil to the misfortunes and sufferings of mankind, and by declaring that men ought to be indifferent to outer events, were able to solve the problem by refusing to consider it. There was, they maintained, no such thing as physical evil, though it is noteworthy that with a curious inconsistency they at once proceeded to justify at some length a factor whose existence they denied.

In the same way Christianity has made its defence of the divine beneficence easier by a practical limitation of the same sort. It is a natural and apparently practicable method of absolving one's gods from responsibility for Evil by assuming it one's self, and were physical evil a matter of human suffering alone, it might be satisfactorily explained and the problem of Evil in general much simplified by regarding it as the wages of sin. The fact of sin, indeed, would still remain to challenge any attempt at an unmitigated optimism, and we may doubt whether Christianity with its doctrine of Adam's fall and of inherited guilt has successfully disposed of the

difficulty. For, granting that a perfect man could fall, would he? Is not perfection at least just that quality which, if tempted, would *not* fall? Apart, however, from this difficulty, and from the moral obliquity of the doctrine of original sin, the fact of physical evil in its larger aspect still remains unexplained. A perfect man might fall, and we, through our consanguinity with our first parent, might perhaps be involved in his sin with some show of justice. But no theological ingenuity, it would seem, could decently attribute the sufferings of unrelated, unfree, irrational, and sinless animals to the same cause. Yet animal as well as human suffering is something which a theodicy must face. A God that does not need to be freed of responsibility for the one is scarcely worth freeing from blame for the other.

Plotinus, however, is alive to the importance of the more general aspects of the question. Roughly speaking, we may say that the problem presents itself to him in a three- or perhaps a four-fold form. First, there is the bare general fact of motion and change, of generation and corruption. All things are in Heracleitean flux. Everything perishes. Nothing endures. Secondly, there is the failure of any particular to attain its proper perfection. Nothing is its ideal self. Thirdly, there is an apparent conflict between the perfections or entelechies themselves. The ideas or forms of different species seem incapable of being realized together. It appears impossible, for example, for the lion and the lamb to attain their respective

perfections in the same world. The species "lion" being marked by the predicate "lamb-eating," would seem to deprive the species "lamb" of any *point d'appui*. Finally, there is the very real and obvious conflict between particulars themselves of both the same and different species. Thus two lions will fight over the same lamb. Men are not only carnivorous, but cannibal. The whole world is a battle-field on which all sides are defeated. These four characteristics, then, of mundane existence will, quite apart from the problem of moral evil, afford ample material for a theodicy.

The first point, the general mutability and transitoriness of all earthly things, Plotinus has answered to all practical purposes, by assigning to the universe a perfection of its own. It is part of terrestrial excellence to be ever in change and motion. Generation and corruption we should naturally expect in a phenomenal world, however perfect of its kind it may be. Change is in itself no evil. It is better that a thing should exist even for a short time than not at all.[1] Moreover, if the temporal world be not eternal, it is at least everlasting. Individuals pass, but the type persists. Thus we find Plotinus continuing the world's eloquent self-exordium which we have already quoted. "Be not astonished," he says, "if fire be extinguished by water, and yet fire itself consume something else. For fire itself was brought into existence

[1] iii. 2, § 15 (266 c) [vol. i. p. 243, l. 28 *et seq.*].

by something other than itself, and as it was not brought into existence by itself, so it is destroyed by something else. Indeed, it came into existence through another's destruction, and if this be the case, destruction will bear no terrors for it; in the place of the fire destroyed there will be another fire. In the incorporeal heaven each thing endures; in this heaven of ours the whole, together with its honourable and ruling parts, lives for ever, but individual souls change their bodies and are born at different times in different forms. But as often as she can the individual soul withdraws from the process of generation into the company of the World-Soul. Bodies live by virtue of the type (each individual body in accordance with the whole), if indeed they are to derive their being, their life, and their sustenance from within themselves. Life here on earth involves motion, but life in the intelligible world does not."[1] Finally, we have the phenomenon of disease passed over with the remark that "things which have bodies must needs fall sick."[2]

[1] iii. 2, § 4 (257 E) [vol. i. p. 230, l. 18 *et seq.*]. 4. *πῦρ δὲ εἰ ὑπὸ ὕδατος σβέννυται καὶ ἕτερον ὑπὸ πυρὸς φθείρεται, μὴ θαυμάσῃς. καὶ γὰρ εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἄλλο αὐτὸ ἤγαγεν, οὐδ' ἀχθὲν ὑφ' αὑτοῦ ὑπ' ἄλλου ἐφθάρη, καὶ ἦλθε δὲ εἰς τὸ εἶναι ὑπ' ἄλλου φθορᾶς, καὶ ἡ φθορὰ δὲ αὐτῷ οὐδὲν ἄν, εἰ οὕτω, δεινὸν φέροι, καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ φθαρέντος πυρὸς πῦρ ἄλλο. ἐν μὲν γὰρ [τῷ] ἀσωμάτῳ οὐρανῷ ἕκαστον μένει, ἐν δὲ τῷδε τῷ οὐρανῷ πᾶν μὲν ἀεὶ ζῇ καὶ ὅσα τίμια καὶ κύρια μέρη, αἱ δὲ ἀμείβουσαι ψυχαὶ σώματα ἄλλοτε ἐν ἄλλῳ εἴδει γίγνονται, καὶ ὅταν δὲ δύνηται, ἔξω γενέσεως στᾶσα ψυχὴ μετὰ τῆς πάσης ἐστὶ ψυχῆς. σώματα δὲ ζῇ κατ' εἶδος καὶ καθ' ὅλα ἕκαστα, εἴπερ ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ ζῷα ἔσται καὶ τραφήσεται· ζωὴ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα κινουμένη, ἐκεῖ δὲ ἀκίνητος.*

[2] iii. 2, § 5 (258 E) [vol. i. p. 232, l. 16]. *καὶ ἀνάγκη νοσεῖν σώματα ἔχουσι.*

Evidently this argument is also relevant to the fourth point—the conflict of particulars with one another. Plotinus knew nothing of extinct or disappearing species. Species, he saw, apparently were not destroyed either by attacks upon them from the outside, or by the inner friction of their proper particulars. He could point out that both the formal structure of the universe as a whole, and the integrity of each special form in the system, were no more affected by the conflict and reciprocal destruction of the parts, than by the dissolution incidental to the general process of "becoming." So far as dying is concerned, it is no better to die in one's bed than in one's boots. If death is no evil, and inflicts no harm on the universe, the world is none the worse, *ceteris paribus*, for violent than for natural death. Indeed, from the world's point of view, violent death is natural, only more subtly so. The naturalism that lurks in the entire argument is self-evident.

The next difficulty which concerns us is the seeming failure of the particular to attain its proper entelechy. This is in truth a crucial point for Plotinus. As he says himself, "the question is not whether this thing is inferior to that, but whether it is self-sufficing in its own nature."[1] Apparently we must answer in the negative. Things fall short of their ideal outlines. Not only am I not God or

[1] iii. 3, § 3 (273 A) [vol. i. p. 253, l. 23 *et seq.*]. δεῖ γὰρ οὐ ζητεῖν, εἰ ἕλαττον ἄλλου, ἀλλ' εἰ ὡς αὐτὸ αὐτάρκως.

an angel or a horse or a tree, but I am not even a perfect man. I am deficient in my proper human nature. And a world in which such a discrepancy between things and their perfections exists is an imperfect world.

Plotinus's reply is brilliant. It consists in a re-application of the principle of varieties of perfection, this time to justify not merely a world, or a special aspect or type within that world, but every individual member of a given species, in being what it is and nothing else. He speaks as follows: "In the case of each of the eternally created genera, one cannot blame the creative Reason, unless one demand that everything should have been made as things uncreate but eternal, and that both in the intelligible and the sensible worlds things should be eternally the same. To ask this is to ask too much good; it is to forget that the form given to each thing is sufficient unto it. It is like complaining because a man has no horns—like a failure to see that it was impossible that Reason should not extend over all things, that it was necessary that the lesser should be contained by the greater, and the part by the whole, and that they could not be equal—for then they would not have been parts. In the intelligible world each thing is all, but here on earth each thing is not all."

So far we have merely a restatement of the old argument, though the last two sentences are pregnant with future issue. But Plotinus goes farther, and this is the novel and the important part of the passage.

"So, too, a man in so far as he, as a part, is an individual, is not the whole man. But if anywhere among the single parts we find something which is not itself a part, it is this principle which makes of them a whole. *Now we ought not to ask that a particular man*, qua *individual*, *should be perfect to the highest pitch of virtue. For in that case he would be no longer a part, but the whole.* To be sure, the whole is not jealous of an increase of beauty and value in the part, since the greater value of the part makes the whole more beautiful." [1]

The sentences I have italicized contain the gist of the argument. In them we get at last a comparatively clear and definite view of the thought underlying the whole Plotinian argument about the possibility of varieties of perfection. It is, I think we may safely say, to all practical purposes the same as Leibnitz's principle of the identity of indiscernibles.

This, plainly, is the true inwardness of his plea for the several perfections of νοῦς, ψυχή, and the universe.

[1] iii. 2, § 13 (265 B) [vol. i. p. 242, l. 1 *et seq.* ; p. 476, l. 10 *et seq.*]. ἐφ' ἑκάστου μὲν οὖν τῶν γινομένων ἀεὶ γενῶν οὐκ ἔστιν αἰτιᾶσθαι τὸν ποιοῦντα λόγον, εἴ τις μὴ ἀξιοῖ ἕκαστον οὕτω γεγονέναι χρῆναι, ὡς τὰ μὴ γεγονότα, ἀίδια δέ, ἔν τε νοητοῖς ἔν τε αἰσθητοῖς ἀεὶ τὰ αὐτὰ ὄντα, προσθήκην αἰτῶν ἀγαθοῦ πλείονα, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸ δοθὲν ἑκάστῳ εἶδος αὔταρκες ἡγούμενος, οἷον τῷδε, ὅτι μὴ κέρατα, οὐ σκοπούμενος, ὅτι ἀδύνατον ἦν λόγον μὴ οὐκ ἐπὶ πάντα ἐλθεῖν, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἔδει ἐν τῷ μείζονι τὰ ἐλάττω καὶ ἐν τῷ ὅλῳ τὰ μέρη καὶ οὐκ ἴσα δυνατὸν εἶναι· ἢ οὐκ ἂν ἦν μέρη. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἄνω πᾶν πάντα, τὸ δὲ κάτω οὐ πάντα ἕκαστον. καὶ ἄνθρωπος δὴ καθ' ὅσον μέρος ἕκαστος οὐ πᾶς. εἰ δέ που ἐν μέρεσί τισι καὶ ἄλλο τι, ὃ οὐ μέρος, τούτῳ κἀκεῖνο πᾶν. ὁ δὴ καθ' ἕκαστα ᾗ τοῦτο οὐκ ἀπαιτητέος τέλειος εἶναι εἰς ἀρετῆς ἄκρον· ἤδη γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἂν μέρος. οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ τῷ ὅλῳ τὸ μέρος κοσμηθὲν εἰς μείζονα ἀξίαν ἐφθόνηται· καὶ γὰρ κάλλιον τὸ ὅλον ποιεῖ κοσμηθὲν ἀξίᾳ μείζονι.

We cannot expect of Mind that it should be in all respects similar to the One, nor of Soul that it should be completely like Mind, nor yet of the corporeal universe that it should be the same as the World-Soul. Were all exact replicas of one another, they could not be distinguished from one another. The mind, could it exist *qua* mind under those circumstances, would have no possible criterion for telling them apart, or for that matter, for separating them in the first place. We could not even arrange them as triplets or quadruplets, and then confuse them. We could not say to them, "I know you are four different entities, but I do not know which is which." For the mere separation of them involves space, and space is precisely a mark of individuation of the universe, which, were it an exact reproduction of the intelligible world, it would not possess. To require, then, that νοῦς shall be a *perfect* copy of the One, or the universe of ψυχή, is not only practically, but logically, to demand that νοῦς shall *be* the One, ψυχή νοῦς, and the cosmos ψυχή; in other words, it is to annihilate all four principles as objects of rational discourse, and to leave only the superunitary, super-intelligible, superexistential, ineffable, and unindividuated divine Nothingness.

The like holds true of the relation of particulars to the form or type of the species to which they belong. If I am to be I, and you you, neither of us the other, and both of us *men* and not *man*, then we must be unlike both each other and our type in

some respects. For did you and I both perfectly embody the type, we should be indiscernible from it, and hence from one another. There would be no sufficient reason for distinguishing us or any perfectly representative particular from it in the first place. Even individuation and repetition in space would be out of the question, for reasons already given. Existence and relations in space are some of the conditions which make the particular an imperfect copy of the universal, which is in no one place; and hence *ex hypothesi* they must be absent in a really complete exemplification. Here again, all possible criteria for distinction and separation would be lacking. Each type or species would be like the Aristotelian God, "ἓν ἄρα καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ," a particular concrete type, if I may so express it, exemplified only in itself. Thus there would only be one lion and one lamb in the world, and they would be typical; only one man, and he would be the only instance of himself.

The argument, however, must seem to us largely a *tour de force*, of little practical or metaphysical significance. This is true so far as those of us are concerned who have ceased to consecrate types or to regard the universal as more than an average, to be avoided as mediocre and not to be sought as the sovereign good. But in a system where the universal is not an average of facts, but a standard of values, not a mere idea, but an ideal, it is pregnant with significance. For Plotinus it

proves a treacherous weapon. Its cogency is obvious. If there are to be individual men at all they must be different from the Platonic Idea of man, just as νοῦς must be other than the One, ψυχή other than νοῦς. But the Idea of man is also the entelechy or perfection of man. Hence, if there are individual men, they must by reason of their individuality fall short of their ideal nature. We cannot, as Plotinus says, "expect them *qua* individual men to be perfect to the highest pitch of virtue." For the highest pitch of virtue is found in the ideal humanity alone.

At this point Plotinus is in a quandary. He has had in mind the notion of varieties of perfection, and the analogy of the One, νοῦς, and ψυχή, or of the various special entelechies or perfections within the universe, and has argued along that line of thought. By analogy, each particular will also have its appropriate and individual nature. It will be as irrelevant to blame me because I am not you, as the human species because it is not angelic, or Mind because it is not the One. But unfortunately the actual application of the analogy reveals the sudden paradox that the proper perfection of the individual man consists, when all is said and done, in failing to attain it.

The immediate cause of the difficulty is sufficiently plain. The analogy is improper and breaks down. One kind of perfection may be different from, without being better or worse than, another. But a thing cannot be other than perfect without being

imperfect. If it is the universal which is complete, then particularity is a mark of deficiency.

But in another sense the analogy and its application are relevant. They would be sound enough if kinds could be held to be at the same time grades of perfection, and goods could be absolute from one point of view, and members of a hierarchy from another. Indeed for a *reductio ad absurdum* of his attempt to hold both points of view simultaneously, Plotinus could have devised no better illustration. He has shown us in concrete and practical form how things would work out if we could logically say of a thing that it was at the same time perfect, but not so perfect as something else. In that case I might be perfect, although not so perfect as the Idea of man, just as ψυχή is perfect though her perfection is not so perfect as that of her prototype in the intelligible world. I, like ψυχή, could be justified for being no better than I am by the plea that I am as good as can be expected of *me*. I could no more be required to be perfect to the highest pitch of virtue than could ψυχή be required to be perfect with the perfection of νοῦς, or νοῦς with that of the One; for I should then be no longer I, but the ideal archetype of my species, just as ψυχή would then be νοῦς, and νοῦς the One. In other words, I might be a good John Smith, but a bad man. I might be perfect from one point of view, imperfect from another. I might be perfect, but not so perfect as I might be. Or, you and I could both be perfect, but at the same time one of us could be

better than the other, and neither of us so excellent as human excellence.

The absurdity is patent: also the impropriety of the analogy. Yet, we must again insist that it is no more absurd to say that, though I am perfect, my individual perfection is not so perfect as the highest pitch of human excellence (and it is this assumption that underlies Plotinus's justification of the apparent imperfection of the particular as compared with the type), than that the perfect horse is not so perfect as the perfect man, or the perfect man as the perfect God.

This last statement may well seem the crowning absurdity. Human, we repeat, is lower than angelic perfection. It is scarcely necessary, I think, to review the argument on the other side. Its point consisted in showing that in a perfect world everything would be satisfied with itself and its experience, and it would occur to nothing to compare itself with other parts of its world, or one part with another as better or worse. Only an outside observer could do that, and would prove himself imperfect by his ability to make the comparison.

The particular point, however, with which we are concerned here, is that were such a comparison possible, and could we logically say, as we persist in saying, that a thing is perfect after its kind but that its kind is not so perfect as some other, then we can with equal right maintain that any individual being, however deficient he may be in human excellence, is

perfect with a perfection of his own, though that perfection is not so perfect as the perfection of better men or as human perfection in general. For to grade perfections is, as we have already pointed out, to set up a universal, or idea, or type, or standard of perfection which different kinds of perfection embody to a different degree, precisely as different particulars of the same species variously approximate to the same form. What holds true of the relations in the one case holds equally true of them in the other. If a so-called kind of perfection can be called perfect, and yet not most perfect (the tautology is deliberate), then a thing can be called perfect and yet fall short of its proper perfection. In fine, Plotinus would seem to have exposed the untenability of his own position, and to have demonstrated conclusively what he most wished to avoid, to wit, that grades of perfection are merely euphemistic terms for degrees of imperfection.

I have, as it may seem, insisted on this point to undue and fruitless length. But it is important, because it so clearly betrays the paradox which is fundamental throughout the Plotinian theodicy. The grounds for this particular and flagrant instance we may naturally find in the conflict of the two points of view. Unless Plotinus could justify the existence of the individual *qua* individual, he was committed to mysticism. Kinds of perfection must inevitably be revealed in their true light as grades of imperfection. If I am to be blamed for not being

an ideal man, νοῦς and ψυχή and the world are equally to be blamed for not being the One. But this, as we have seen, Plotinus could not allow.

On the other hand, unless perfections could be arranged in a hierarchy, he was committed to naturalism. This is indeed the implication of his argument as it stands. If I am never to be rebuked for not being other than myself, it can only be on the ground that I am at every moment of my existence a perfect example of myself: that is a perfect natural fact. But this extreme tolerance, again, was impossible.

A third alternative indeed offers itself. It might well occur to us to solve the difficulty in the following way. We might suppose that there were Ideas not only of species, but of individuals. It is no more to be expected, we might say, that all perfect men, than that all perfect natures should be identical. We do not demand of the equine entelechy that it should be the same as the human, nor yet of the human that it should be the same as the angelic. Why, then, should you and I, if we attained our proper perfections, melt together in an identity of indiscernibles? Why should you and I not have each our peculiar entelechies? Then, in truth, it could not be required of either of us that we should be perfect to the height of virtue, in the sense of each individual including in his own nature the nature of all others. That I had not the peculiar virtues of all other men would be nothing

against me. I could only be asked to be my ideal self.

It is all the more astonishing that Plotinus did not avail himself of this promising *via media*, as he maintains the doctrine of Ideas of individuals, and devotes a short book to discussing and proving that the intelligible world contains not only the type of man, but the entelechies of particular men But it seems never to have occurred to him to apply the doctrine to this special point. It would not, to be sure, have rid him of the difficulty. His purpose was to prove that the world actually embodied perfection, and was, as it stood, a perfect world. A discrepancy between the ideal and the actual he could have tolerated no more than could the Stoics.

What defence of his position we find is contained in the last sentence of the passage quoted. "To be sure, the whole is not envious of an increase of beauty and value in the part, for the greater value of the part makes the whole more beautiful." Here Plotinus would seem to be to some extent conscious of the anarchistic ethical implications of his doctrine. If I cannot be expected to be as virtuous as a man might be, there is no reason to expect me to be more virtuous than I am. Good or bad, I am enacting my proper self. It is apparently to guard against this implication, used later, curiously enough, in justification of moral evil, that the statement is made. Although, it declares, we are justified in not being so virtuous as man

might be, we must strive to be more virtuous than we are.

The argument has a modern ring. In fact, Plotinus is here face to face with the same difficulty as confronts the absolutist of to-day. The question for both is this: How give any real significance and dignity to moral aspiration and effort in a world already in its essence complete and perfect? For if the world be already a completed fact, if it is and ever has been grasped as a perfect whole *sub specie aeternitatis*, what is the use of our trying to improve it? Whatever we do, we cannot make it better, or, for that matter, worse. We cannot change its value one whit in God's eyes, since that value was fixed before time was. I cannot detract from the perfection of the absolute by my vice, as I cannot add to it by my virtue. For the Absolute is perfect. All our activities, then, irrespective of their moral significance, are performed *ad majorem* or rather *ad maximam Dei gloriam.*

Both systems, too, meet the difficulty in the same way. Although the Absolute is perfect, it is better that I should act as if it were not. Nay, it is part of its perfection that I should regard it as imperfect. That I seek to improve it is precisely one of the reasons why it is incapable of improvement. Conversely, if I were satisfied with it as I found it, it would be really a most unsatisfactory affair. In like manner Plotinus assures us that though we are really justified in falling short of what human virtue can

be, we must not realize that fact. We must press on towards the height of perfection, though we are perfect as we are. If we took Plotinus at his word that we are perfect, we should be imperfect. Though the type be already in all ways excellent, we should seek to add to that excellence by greater virtue in ourselves.

Such statements, as it seems to me, are only saved from complete absurdity by a latent naturalism. For all practical purposes of thought and action, ethical monism divorces the perfection of the universe from the moral ideal. A natural perfection is indeed neither made nor marred by the moral character of our actions. It is equally expressed in, and equally indifferent to, good and evil. On the other hand, if the world be already perfect in the naturalistic sense of the word, it is not thereby rendered incapable of moral improvement. If a morally evil world may be a perfect natural fact, a morally good world is none the less so. By thus distinguishing between the uses of the term, it can be logically held that the world is already as good as it can be, but that our moral effort can make it much better, or that although I as I am, and the human type as it is, are perfect facts in a perfect system of facts, I am not bound on a futile errand in seeking to adorn myself with greater righteousness, and am even benefiting mankind by my increase of virtue.

The error comes in seeking to amalgamate the moral with the natural meaning, and to find the

ethical ideal embodied in Reality as it is. The result is twofold. The ethical ideal is emptied of its ideality, and ethical action is stultified. God is degraded from a vision of what ought to be to a fictitious justification of what is. And in a universe completely expressive of his will, our efforts to make anything better are only saved from blasphemy by their irrationality and impotence.

As regards the third symptom of physical evil, the conflict of entelechies or perfections among themselves, I confess myself somewhat in doubt. It is hard to see whether or no the point really occurred to Plotinus. But there is a passage at the beginning of the supplementary book on Providence, dealing with the conflict of particulars, which suggests, if not that he had the point in mind, at least a possible method of dealing with it.

"Souls," he says, "and their works are harmoniously related, in that unity results from them even though they be opposites. The reason for this is that all things proceed from unity and come together in unity by a natural necessity. So, though differences and antitheses come into being, they are nevertheless synthesized in a single system because of their origin in the One. For just as particular animals, say horses, are included in a single genus although they war with each other and bite and quarrel and rage in jealous anger, so other genera are likewise units. This is true also of man. Again, all these types can be reduced to unity

under the genus 'animal.' The non-animals too can be arranged according to type, and, further, all these types can be included in the one genus, 'being,' and then reduced still farther to the source of being.

"Furthermore, take the source of being as a starting point, and descend by a process of analysis and see how the One, by virtue of being prior to all things, and at the same time comprehending them all in an ordered unity, spreads itself out and is divided in such wise that it is a multiple living being in which each part does what is appropriate to its particular nature, although it also has its place in the whole. Thus fire burns, and the horse does what is appropriate for a horse to do. Each man also does what comes natural to him, and different men do different things. And from their natures follow both their works and their lives, whether good or evil." [1]

This argument would seem to find the logical opposition of contraries symptomatic of evil, and to endeavour to solve it in true Hegelian manner by uniting thesis and antithesis in a higher synthesis. It is, however, irrelevant. Subsumption is not reconciliation. Logical consistency is no guarantee of perfection. A perfect world, it is true, would have to be an intelligible world, but an intelligible world is not necessarily perfect. Let us suppose for the sake of argument that a thoroughly logical and consistent world could contain both a heaven and a hell. This

[1] iii. 3, § 1 (271 F) [vol. i. p. 251, l. 22 *et seq.*].

is assumed by many. In fact God's final and perfect world is largely held to be heaven and hell and nothing more. But could a world which contained a hell be properly called perfect? Not, it seems to me, without distorting the meaning of the term. To the perfect all things must be perfect. But a heaven that was conscious of the existence and significance of hell, and still found its empyrean unclouded, would do violence to all noble human sentiment. Its perfection would be alien to every moral aspiration and ideal. It would be the devil's heaven and no one else's. On the other hand a hell that should be satisfied with itself, or could by any persuasion be brought to see itself as contributory to the perfection of the world of which it formed a part, would not be hell. For the essence of hell is to feel itself hopelessly deficient in, and at variance with, the Good. Thus a logically consistent world might, but a perfect world could not, contain a hell.

We need not trespass upon eschatological fields, however, to illustrate our point. Our own world is an excellent example. We may, if we like, say that our world is a logical and coherent system, dismissing apparent irrationalities as points incompletely understood. But that assumption does not make the world much more satisfactory from the point of view of the total human purpose. We take, to be sure, an interest in understanding the universe, and the fulfilment of that interest would be a factor in human perfection. But the interest is after all proximate

and not ultimate. We seek to understand our world in order that we may live in it more securely and happily; though, on the other hand, since we are rational creatures, we cannot, quite apart from the results of such scientific comprehension, live perfectly happily in a world which is not completely understood. We are, however, possessed of more than the scientific and logical interest, and hence its satisfaction need not imply that of the whole will. As matters stand, it does not. The logical character of the world would become synonymous with its perfection, only if we became purely intellectual beings with no other demand upon our world than that of logical self-consistency. But the normal human being is not contented with merely accounting for Evil. His purpose is to be rid of it. And the perfect world for him is not one in which sin and suffering have been explained, but from which they have been banished. On this score we may disallow the Plotinian argument. And as it in no wise pacifies the practical conflict of concepts, so it in no wise palliates that actual conflict of particulars in the world, to which we now turn.

"It is thus," Plotinus tells us, referring to the argument just sketched and criticized, "that the case stands with particulars regarded in themselves. But," he continues, "the interweaving of these particular things which have come and are ever coming into being might be a matter for consideration and perplexity, seeing that the other animals devour one

another, and that men set upon one another, and that there is continual warfare without cease or respite. The difficulty is especially great, if it is Reason that has brought about such a condition of things and this condition is to be called good. For it is no longer of any use for the defenders of this doctrine to argue that things are as good as they can be, that Matter is the reason for their inferiority, and that Evil cannot be destroyed even were it advisable that it should be; that things are good as they are and that the Matter present does not dominate them, but was provided that things might be as they are, or rather that itself might be what it is, by virtue of Reason. Reason is the first principle, Reason is all things; all that has come into being in accordance with Reason, and has been set in order by Reason after its birth, must be in all respects rational. What, then, is the necessity of this implacable war among animals, and among men? We reply: That animals should devour one another is necessary, for it is the mutual punishment exacted from living beings who, even if they were not killed, could not live for ever. If, then, at the time appointed for their death they depart in such a way as to benefit other creatures, why grudge it? What matters it if, when consumed, they are born as other forms of life? In the same way, on the stage, the murdered actor changes his part, and taking another's mask, again comes upon the scene, for he has not been really dead at all. If death in this world be a

change of body, like the change of costume on the stage, or even if it be a complete abandonment of the body, as an actor who goes off the stage altogether and never comes back later to enact his part, what is there terrible in such a transformation of living beings into one another? It is surely much better than that they should never have come into being in the beginning. In that case there would be in the world no life at all and no ability to communicate it to others. But, things being as they are, there is an abundance of life in the universe which creates all things and varies the fashion of their existences; nor can it forbear to produce beautiful and comely objects—living playthings, as it were." [1]

[1] iii. 2, § 15 (265 F) [vol. i. p. 242, l. 30 *et seq.*]. 15. *τὰ μὲν οὖν ἕκαστα αὐτὰ ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν θεωρούμενα οὕτως· ἡ συμπλοκὴ δὲ ἡ τούτων γεννηθέντων καὶ ἀεὶ γεννωμένων ἔχοι ἂν τὴν ἐπίστασιν καὶ ἀπορίαν κατά τε τὴν ἀλληλοφαγίαν τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων καὶ τὰς ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἀλλήλους ἐπιθέσεις, καὶ ὅτι πόλεμος ἀεὶ καὶ οὐ μήποτε παῦλαν οὐδ' ἀνοχὴν λάβῃ, καὶ μάλιστα εἰ λόγος πεποίηκεν οὕτως ἔχειν, καὶ οὕτω λέγεται καλῶς ἔχειν. οὐ γὰρ ἔτι τοῖς οὕτω λέγουσιν ἐκεῖνος ὁ λόγος βοηθεῖ, ὡς καλῶς κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἔχει [καὶ] αἰτία ὕλη οὕτως ἐχόντων, ὡς ἐλαττόνως ἔχειν, καὶ ὡς οὐ δυνατὸν τὰ κακὰ ἀπολέσθαι, εἴπερ οὕτως ἐχρῆν ἔχειν, καὶ καλῶς οὕτω, καὶ οὐχ ἡ ὕλη παρελθοῦσα κρατεῖ, ἀλλὰ παρήχθη, ἵνα οὕτω, μᾶλλον δὲ ᾗ καὶ αὐτὴ αἰτίᾳ λόγου οὕτως. ἀρχὴ οὖν λόγος καὶ πάντα λόγος καὶ τὰ γινόμενα κατ' αὐτὸν καὶ συνταττόμενα ἐπὶ τῇ γενέσει πάντως οὕτως. τίς οὖν ἡ τοῦ πολέμου τοῦ ἀκηρύκτου ἐν ζῴοις καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀνάγκη; ἡ ἀλληλοφαγίαι μὲν ἀναγκαῖαι, ἀμοιβαὶ ζῴων οὖσαι οὐ δυναμένων, οὐδ' εἴ τις μὴ κτιννύοι αὐτά, οὕτω μένειν εἰς ἀεί. εἰ δὲ ἐν ᾧ χρόνῳ δεῖ ἀπελθεῖν οὕτως ἀπελθεῖν ἔδει, ὡς ἄλλοις γενέσθαι χρείαν παρ' αὐτῶν, τί φθονεῖν ἔδει; τί δ' εἰ βρωθέντα ἄλλα ἐφύετο; οἷον εἰ ἐπὶ σκηνῆς τῶν ὑποκριτῶν ὁ πεφονευμένος ἀλλαξάμενος τὸ σχῆμα ἀναλαβὼν πάλιν εἰσίοι ἄλλο πρόσωπον, ἀλλ' οὐ τέθνηκεν ἀληθῶς οὗτος. εἰ οὖν καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἀλλαγή ἐστι σώματος, ὥσπερ ἐσθῆτος ἐκεῖ, ἡ καὶ παντελὴς ἀπόθεσις σώματος, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖ ἔξοδος ἐκ τῆς σκηνῆς παντελὴς οὔποτε εἰς ὕστερον πάλιν ἥξοντος ἐναγωνίσασθαι, τί ἂν δεινὸν εἴη ἡ τοιαύτη τῶν ζῴων εἰς ἄλληλα*

So much for Plotinus's treatment of the more general indications of physical evil. As we predicted, it shows evidence of a rather broader and more generous view of the problem than do many theodicies. It seems to some extent to get beyond the violence done to human interests and feelings, and to take note of possible cosmic damage. But at the same time it is disappointing. It fails to touch what is to us the crux of the question, namely, the sufferings of other sentient creatures than ourselves. Plotinus's answer, it is true, would probably have been ready enough had the point been pressed upon him. He would have used the same argument which we habitually use to excuse animal suffering, and to rob the spectacle of human pain of its sting. We must not judge by appearances, he would say. As children weep and wail for little cause, so human evidences of pain certainly, and animal probably, are out of all proportion to the real evil suffered.[1]

We have now done, for the time being, with the Plotinian discussion of the more general aspects of physical evil. Its predominant tone is naturalistic, or, it would perhaps be better to say, Stoic, if indeed such a distinction implies any essential difference. The warning, indeed, should be repeated that the arguments we have followed do not represent

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μεταβολὴ πολὺ βελτίων οὖσα τοῦ μηδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτὰ γενέσθαι; ἐκείνως μὲν γὰρ ἐρημία ζωῆς καὶ τῆς ἐν ἄλλῳ οὔσης ἀδυναμία· νῦν δὲ πολλὴ οὖσα ἐν τῷ παντὶ ζωὴ πάντα ποιεῖ καὶ ποικίλλει ἐν τῷ ζῆν καὶ οὐκ ἀνέχεται μὴ ποιοῦσα ἀεὶ καλὰ καὶ εὐειδῆ ζῶντα παίγνια.

[1] iii. 2, § 15 (267 B) [vol. i. p. 245 top].

Plotinus's final word. All of them, as well as what Stoic reasonings we have yet to trace, are qualified in the end in such a way as to avoid many of the objections to the Stoic position.

We turn now to the immediate bearings of physical evil upon human life. Here the first point in the Plotinian refutation which we note, is thoroughly Stoic in character. It is tantamount to the Stoic denial that physical evil exists, at any rate so far as the wise and virtuous are concerned. Using an analogy already employed by Chrysippus and Marcus Aurelius, and in words which the great Emperor might have written himself, he writes: "We must regard murders and all manners of death and the wastings and sackings of cities as we should regard them upon the stage of a theatre; that is, we must look upon them all as a change of form and a shifting of scenes, as tears and lamentations merely acted. For in the world as on the stage, in every event of life, it is not the inner soul, but the outer shadow of man that laments and weeps and plays its many parts, with the whole earth for stage, and the scenes laid in many places. For such emotions belong to the man who knows only how to live the lower and the outward life, and is ignorant that in his tears and his seriousness alike he is but playing. Only the serious man must be serious in serious things; the other man is a mere trifler. They who have no conception of real seriousness take trifles seriously, and are triflers themselves.

If a [serious] man join in their trifling and share their experience, let him reflect that he has fallen into a children's game, and laid aside his true rôle. Even if Socrates plays, it is the outer Socrates that does so. One must also remember that one should not take weeping and tears as witnesses to the existence of evil, since children also weep and wail over what is not evil."[1]

If we analyse this description of ὁ σπουδαῖος, the "serious" or "moral" man, and connect it with the rest of Plotinus's teaching, we shall find the old conflict between the Stoic and the mystic tendencies of his thought latent within it. Yet, at the same time, nothing could better illustrate both the points of similarity of the two types and the identity of the metaphysical implications of the two systems, as far as practical effects upon conduct are concerned. Both the true Stoic and the true mystic are agreed

[1] iii. 2, § 15 (266 end) [vol. i. p. 244, l. 14 *et seq.*]. ὥσπερ δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν θεάτρων ταῖς σκηναῖς, οὕτω χρὴ καὶ τοὺς φόνους θεᾶσθαι καὶ πάντας θανάτους καὶ πόλεων ἀλώσεις καὶ ἁρπαγάς, μεταθέσεις πάντα καὶ μετασχηματίσεις καὶ θρήνων καὶ οἰμωγῶν ὑποκρίσεις. καὶ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἑκάστων οὐχ ἡ ἔνδον ψυχή, ἀλλ' ἡ ἔξω ἀνθρώπου σκιὰ καὶ οἰμώζει καὶ ὀδύρεται καὶ πάντα ποιεῖ ἐν σκηνῇ τῇ ὅλῃ γῇ πολλαχοῦ σκηνὰς ποιησαμένων. τοιαῦτα γὰρ ἔργα ἀνθρώπου τὰ κάτω καὶ τὰ ἔξω μόνα ζῆν εἰδότος καὶ ἐν δακρύοις καὶ σπουδαίοις ὅτι παίζων ἐστὶν ἠγνοηκότος. μόνῳ γὰρ τῷ σπουδαίῳ σπουδαστέον ἐν σπουδαίοις τοῖς ἔργοις, ὁ δ' ἄλλος ἄνθρωπος παίγνιον. σπουδάζεται δὲ καὶ τὰ παίγνια τοῖς σπουδάζειν οὐκ εἰδόσι καὶ αὐτοῖς οὖσι παιγνίοις. εἰ δέ τις συμπαίζων αὐτοῖς [σπουδαῖος] τὰ τοιαῦτα πάθοι, ἴστω παραπεσὼν παίδων παιδιᾷ τὸ περὶ αὐτὸν ἀποθέμενος πρόσωπον. εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ παίζοι Σωκράτης, παίζει τῷ ἔξω Σωκράτει. δεῖ δὲ κἀκεῖνο ἐνθυμεῖσθαι, ὡς οὐ δεῖ τεκμήρια τοῦ κακὰ εἶναι τὸ δακρύειν καὶ θρηνεῖν τίθεσθαι, ὅτι δὴ καὶ παῖδες ἐπὶ οὐ κακοῖς καὶ δακρύουσι καὶ ὀδύρονται.

that the ordinary standard of mundane values is false. Both have a profound sense of the vanity of life. Both teach that the conditions of virtue and proper human excellence are independent of outer events, and that therefore human happiness is indifferent to them. Both believe that the true good is attainable only by a process of curtailment and concentration in which the individual withdraws from the world and from all human ties to live more intensely within himself.

But the one differs profoundly from the other in the quality of the equanimity with which he bears the assault of outer events. The Stoic regards them as having an equal right with himself to be, and to be what they are as he is what he is, and as possessing an intrinsic perfection of their own no less appropriate and necessary to the perfection of the world-system than is his proper nature. The mystic, on the other hand, regards them with the indifference which their essential worthlessness and unreality deserve. The mystic, in short, finds that the world is wholly evil, the Stoic that it is entirely good. The one would deny, mortify, and purge it out of existence; the other submits, acquiesces, even cheerfully accepts it. The one seeks his final happiness in a radical and drastic reform of his experience, the other in rendering himself insensible to his experience as it is. The one seeks within himself to make true what he finds to be good, the other to make good what he finds to be true.

In the Plotinian "seriousness" are combined the essential features of both these attitudes. Had one asked Plotinus his opinion of this stage-world upon which we are called to play a part, he would have replied like the Stoics that it is a perfect world. The scenery, the setting, the other actors, the lines, the gestures, are perfect after their several kinds, and equally appropriate to the nature of the play. More, the play is not a farce, but a serious and rational affair. Regarded in its entirety, it has all the marks of an intelligible whole, embodying as it does a rational plan and idea. That is, the Stoic vision *sub specie aeternitatis* has its metaphysical counterpart in the Plotinian *νοῦς*.

But the "serious man" would have qualified his statement in mystic fashion. This world is perfect as a world, but its perfection is an inferior kind of perfection. No possible attitude towards it can bring final happiness. It is only by excluding it from vision of any sort, *sub specie aeternitatis* no less than *temporis*, and by passing into another altogether new and ineffable sphere of experience, that the sovereign good of human life can be found.

But with both the mystic and the Stoic he would agree in regarding the world of daily human activities as something in which his real inner self is not implicated. There is nothing there that vitally concerns it; nothing which can increase its excellence or its happiness; nothing which can mar or take from it its proper good. Practically such a theory had to

make concession to facts, just as the Stoics had to relax their indifference to outer events, and admit that some external conditions were preferable to others, and just as the mystic has to make the practice of ordinary morality a preliminary step towards the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision. But theoretically the two attitudes were full of danger, and of their danger Plotinus was aware.

Curiously enough, different as the attitudes of the mystic and the Stoic would seem, the peril they involved was precisely the same. By denying the relevancy of outer actions to the inner self, both logically encouraged an antinomianism in practice subversive of all morals. And to this practical subversion their metaphysical theories gave an equal and an identical sanction. For an unmitigated optimism with regard to our world is no less paralysing to moral action than unmitigated pessimism. Indeed, absolute optimism is, in all except name, absolute pessimism. A world, I mean, which is absolutely good is as incapable of improvement as if it were absolutely evil: and moral life has real value only in a world where there is real room for improvement.

Indeed it is more optimistic to act on the belief that the world is wholly evil than that it is wholly good. Both theories encourage an equally apathetic and negative attitude towards outer events, but pessimistic mysticism leaves a hope where absolute optimism leaves none. The mystic by retiring within himself

may find something better than the world, the optimist nothing. The mystic may be as hopefully rebellious as the optimist must be hopelessly resigned. Like the Stoic, the unmitigated optimist must find all things good. They are good in the sight of the Absolute or of God. Since the world cannot be bettered, it is folly to try to reform it, or even to dream of anything better; and the height of folly is to hope, like the mystic, to escape from it altogether by forcing the dream to come true within one's self.

In a mechanical world, too, there is real room for improvement. Its metaphysical reality is calculable, and though a rigid natural system, may be manipulated to further our interests. There is no presumption in saying of such a world that we have made it better, for its only values are those which it has for us, and it holds no opinions of itself that conflict with the judgments we pass upon it.

But to endow the universe with a quasi-human moral perfection, with a self-satisfaction as it were, assimilating to itself the evil and the foul, as well as the fair and good, is to make a Frankenstein's monster of the mechanism. It is merely, one might say, to present naturalism under the form of a monstrous and unworthy myth, allegorizing the irrelevance to natural perfection of good as well as evil, as a kind of organic absorption by natural perfection of evil as well as good. Had we to act upon the assumption of such a cosmic consecration of Evil, action would be invalidated. The universe would not be indifferent

to Evil, but morally no worse, perhaps even better for our sins and imperfections. Moral distinctions would lose all moral sanction, since good and evil would be regarded not as deriving their validity from the human interests to which they were relative, but from the Absolute, and yet in the Absolute they would be travestied, and transformed, and confounded past all possibility of distinguishing between them.

To act morally, then, is to act as if no such thing as the Absolute of ethical monism existed. If one still hold to it theoretically, it is by a sort of seeing through one's self and unconsciously taking one's stand upon the real sanction of action which it conceals. The myth is transparent to practical if not to theoretic reason, and is found to imply beneath the allegorical form in which it is presented no more than the ordinary innocent naturalism. An Absolute to whose perfection evil and imperfection are necessary is quite as irrelevant to the moral ideal as a mechanical world which is indifferent to them. The one is merely a melodramatic masking of the other.

In short, however we may gloss over the fact with romantic phrases, it is practically a naturalistic perfection (a perfection, that is, which we always treat as naturalistic) which we attribute to the Absolute. We deal with it precisely as we deal with a mechanical excellence. We neglect its bearing upon moral conduct. If we extol it at one moment in a mood of pious ecstasy, we recant at the next

by acting as if we did not believe what we said, nay, by having so to act as if we would prove our piety.

I have put in modern terms what seem to me to be the dangers latent in the Stoic and mystic positions; dangers, I must insist, which are also involved in all modern systems of ethical monism. The case might be summed up in terms of Plotinus's dramatic simile, as follows:—As the outer life of man is a mere rôle, an affectation as it were, which neither expresses nor reacts upon his real inner self, so the whole world of appearance becomes a mere affectation of the Absolute, the distinctions and values of which have no ultimate significance in Reality. The sphere of practical moral aspirations and ideas is merely "make believe" for the inner selves both of man and of the world. The actor may be equally unaffected by all the vicissitudes of his rôles, as the dramatist by the different parts in the play. He may be like the naturalistic world, which is dispassionately neutral towards all its events. Or on the other hand, player and playwright may be profoundly and passionately interested in all the lines and all the rôles alike, enacting or creating the villain, the crime, and the suffering with the same zest as the hero, the saint, virtue, and happiness, and getting a positive and perfect satisfaction from the play as a whole, which they call the true happiness of their real selves. In the same way does the Absolute of

ethical monism find our evil as potent a factor in its perfection as our good, passionately interested in both, positively satisfied in both, yet drawing therefrom a satisfaction in the whole result which includes, but yet is more than, its satisfaction in either factor alone.

The difficulty with this is that the practical relation of inner and outer, appearance and reality, has been reversed. If the validity of moral distinctions holds good only of the play or of appearance, then, so far as the moral life is concerned, it is the play which is in earnest, and the appearance which is to all practical purposes the real thing. The player's part is his moral self, and the nature of that part is the only index we have to his moral character. As he delights in the noble lines, and despises the mean in his part, so is he a noble or a mean character and man. But if the value of the drama be unaffected by the morality of the persons that figure in it, that value is non-moral; if it be the greater for their vileness, it is immoral.

Plotinus is aware of the perils of his analogy. "If I am right," he goes on from the last quotation, "how can there still be vice in the world? And where shall we find injustice? And where sin? How is it possible to commit unjust or sinful acts if everything which has been created is fair and good? How could people be miserable if they did not sin or act unjustly? And how can we distinguish between what is in accordance with and what is contrary to

nature if all that is done is in accordance with nature? How, finally, can there be any such thing as impiety towards the Divine Being, when [creator and] creature are what they are? It is as though a poet should make an actor in his play rail and inveigh against the author of the play himself."[1]

And again, "By saying that there is no Evil at all in the universe, we perforce do away with the good as well, and deny that there is any desirable end to be attained; hence we must also deny desire and repulsion and even thought itself. We desire the good, and are repelled by the evil, but thought and judgment have to do with good and evil, and themselves come under the category of the goods."[2]

The answer which Plotinus makes to this objection involves a development in his theodicy for which we are not yet ready. For the present we have to turn back and pursue the problem of physical evil in another of its aspects. Evidently Plotinus

[1] iii. 2, § 16 (267 B-C) [vol. i. p. 245, l. 4 *et seq.*]. 16. *ἀλλ' εἰ καλῶς ταῦτα λέγεται, πῶς ἂν ἔτι πονηρία; ποῦ δ' ἀδικία; ἁμαρτία δὲ ποῦ; πῶς γὰρ ἔστι καλῶς γινομένων ἁπάντων ἀδικεῖν ἢ ἁμαρτάνειν τοὺς ποιοῦντας; κακοδαίμονες δὲ πῶς, εἰ μὴ ἁμαρτάνοιεν μηδ' ἀδικοῖεν; πῶς δὲ τὰ μὲν κατὰ φύσιν, τὰ δὲ παρὰ φύσιν, φήσομεν εἶναι τῶν γινομένων, ἁπάντων τῶν δρωμένων κατὰ φύσιν ὄντων; πῶς δ' ἂν καὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀσέβειά τις εἴη τοιούτου ὄντος τοῦ* [*ποιοῦντος καὶ τοῦ*] *ποιουμένου; οἷον εἴ τις ἐν δράματι λοιδορούμενον ποιητὴς ὑποκριτὴν ποιήσαιτο καὶ κατατρέχοντα τοῦ ποιητοῦ τοῦ δράματος.*

[2] i. 8, § 15 (82 A-B) [vol. i. p. 114, l. 21 *et seq.*]. *κακὸν δὲ εἴ τις λέγοι τὸ παράπαν ἐν τοῖς οὖσι μὴ εἶναι, ἀνάγκη αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀναιρεῖν καὶ μηδὲ ὀρεκτὸν μηδὲν εἶναι· μὴ τοίνυν μηδ' ὄρεξιν μηδ' αὖ ἔκκλισιν μηδὲ νόησιν· ἡ γὰρ ὄρεξις ἀγαθοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἔκκλισις κακοῦ, ἡ δὲ νόησις καὶ ἡ φρόνησις ἀγαθοῦ ἐστι καὶ κακοῦ, καὶ αὕτη ἔν τι τῶν ἀγαθῶν.*

could not allow his denial of the reality of physical evil to apply to the wicked as well as to the just. Such a denial would nullify any pretence at a moral government of the world. Sin could not really be punished, since the instrument of its punishment, and hence the punishment itself, would not exist *qua* evil, and therefore *qua* punitive. The fires by which we are supposed to be purged of our dross would be all light and no heat.

There was also no real contradiction involved in asserting the existence of Evil for the sinner, and denying it for the saint. The sinner's sinfulness consists in his sensitiveness to earthly goods, and this involves a like sensitiveness to earthly ills. The saint, indifferent to the one, is out of reach of the other. Thus the moral government of the world is not in any way invalidated. Those who are insensible to the means employed by the divine justice are those who stand in no need of correction. On the other hand, those who deserve chastisement and correction are *de facto* sensitive to misfortune and suffering. The sinner can only harden himself against the wages of his sin by ceasing to be a sinner; the virtuous man can only render himself sensitive to the means of punishment by making himself liable to their application. In Plotinus's own words, "poverty and sickness are nothing to good men, and useful in the case of evil men."[1]

[1] iii. 2 (258 G) [vol. i. p. 232, l. 14 *et seq.*]. *πενίαι δὲ καὶ νόσοι τοῖς μὲν ἀγαθοῖς οὐδέν, τοῖς δὲ κακοῖς σύμφορα.*

Indeed, looked at in one way, physical evil can with propriety be said not to exist in the case of the sinner. That is, it is not evil that it should exist for the sinner. Given a world in which sin exists, it is better that it should be followed by physical evil than not. This is Plotinus's position. Upon wrong-doing "punishment follows, and it is not unjust that the sinner should suffer according to his character. Nor is it to be demanded that they should be happy who have done nothing worthy of happiness. The good alone are happy."[1]

The connection between physical and moral evil, justified as it is by the moral sentiment that such a connection should exist, is developed by Plotinus at some length. In the first place evil-doers are punished here on earth, both by a deterioration of character and by suffering. "The first punishment is that sinners are wolves and wretches; the second, that they get what it is advantageous for such men to suffer. For it is not possible that the wicked should escape by dying, but their former deeds always bear logical and natural consequences, according as they have been good or evil."[2]

[1] iii. 2, § 3 (258 E) [vol. i. p. 232, l. 3 *et seq.*]. *ἔπεταί γε μὴν δίκη· καὶ οὐκ ἄδικον τοιόνδε γενόμενον ἀκόλουθα πάσχειν τῇ διαθέσει, οὐδ' ἀπαιτητέον τούτοις τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὑπάρχειν, οἷς μὴ εἴργασται εὐδαιμονίας ἄξια. οἱ δ' ἀγαθοὶ μόνοι εὐδαίμονες.*

[2] iii. 2, § 8 (261 E-F) [vol. i. p. 236, l. 24 *et seq.*]. *τοῖς δὲ ταῦτα ποιοῦσι πρώτη μὲν δίκη τὸ λύκοις εἶναι καὶ κακοδαίμοσιν ἀνθρώποις· εἶτα αὐτοῖς καὶ κεῖται ἃ παθεῖν χρεὼν τοὺς τοιούτους· οὐ γὰρ ἔστη ἐνταῦθα κακοῖς γενομένοις ἀποθανεῖν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀεὶ προτέροις ἕπεται ὅσα κατὰ λόγον καὶ φύσιν, χείρω τοῖς χείροσι, τοῖς δὲ ἀμείνοσι τὰ ἀμείνω.*

Thus Plotinus also seems to see that for any complete and satisfactory demonstration of a moral government of the world, more room is needed than this world affords. In a single life no complete and satisfactory connection can be established between desert and fortune. It is just for this reason that the apportionment of reward and merit forms part of the problem of Evil. I do not mean, however, that the inadequacy of a single life for a full display of the divine justice is necessarily the only or even the chief ground of Plotinus's theory of immortality. Immortality is implicated in his system in many other ways. But on whatever grounds it is established, one of its chief uses lies in the help it affords toward a solution of the difficulty in question.

"We must not reject the teaching which tells us not to look always to the present, but also to past and future epochs, and to see how with respect to them also merit is justly rewarded. We shall see, for instance, how former masters are changed to slaves if they have been bad masters, and how such a change profits them; how they who have used their money ill become poor, and how to good men poverty is not profitless; how they who have slain unjustly are themselves slain, and how this is a crime on the part of the murderer, yet a just punishment for the victim; and how, finally, he who is to suffer is brought into contact with him who is ready to perform what it is right that the other should undergo. Let no one believe that a man is a slave or

taken prisoner by chance, or that he suffers bodily injury for no reason. On the contrary, he once did what now he suffers. He who killed his mother, becomes a woman and is killed by his child, and he who has violated a woman will become a woman in order to be violated. From this is derived the holy name Adrasteia, for this disposition of things is in truth not to be escaped; truly it is justice and wondrous wisdom."[1]

There is nothing that need detain us long in this passage. The sense is obvious enough. We are dealing with a theory of transmigration and of Karma or moral causality of a common enough type. We have been born before, we shall be born again. We are what we are, suffer what we do, because of what we have been and performed in past existences, and again shall reap the fruits of past and present combined in our next reincarnation. In this cycle of birth and death we are bound fast till we shall

[1] iii. 2, § 13 (264 c) [vol. i. p. 240, l. 24 *et seq.*]. Cf. iii. 3, § 5 (274 E) [vol. i. p. 256, l. 13 *et seq.*]. iv. 8, § 5 (473 c-D) [vol. i. p. 148, l. 30 *et seq.*]. 13. *ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἐκεῖνον ἀποβλητέον τὸν λόγον, ὃς οὐ πρὸς τὸ παρὸν ἑκάστοτέ φησι βλέπειν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς πρόσθεν περιόδους καὶ αὖ τὸ μέλλον, ὥστε ἐκεῖθεν τάττειν τὴν ἀξίαν καὶ μετατιθέναι ἐκ δεσποτῶν τῶν πρόσθεν δούλους ποιοῦντα, εἰ ἐγένοντο κακοὶ δεσπόται, καὶ ὅτι σύμφορον αὐτοῖς οὕτω, καὶ εἰ κακῶς ἐχρήσαντο πλούτῳ πένητας, καὶ [ὅτι] ἀγαθοῖς οὐκ ἀσύμφορον πένησιν εἶναι, καὶ φονεύσαντας ἀδίκως φονευθῆναι ἀδίκως μὲν τῷ ποιήσαντι, αὐτῷ δὲ δικαίως τῷ παθόντι, καὶ τὸν πεισόμενον συναγαγεῖν εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ τῷ ἐπιτηδείῳ ποιῆσαι, ἃ παθεῖν ἐχρῆν ἐκεῖνον. μὴ γὰρ δὴ κατὰ συντυχίαν δοῦλον μηδὲ αἰχμάλωτον ὡς ἔτυχε μηδὲ ὑβρισθῆναι εἰς σῶμα εἰκῇ, ἀλλὰ ἦν ποτε ταῦτα ποιήσας, ἃ νῦν ἐστι πάσχων· καὶ μητέρα τις ἀνελὼν ὑπὸ παιδὸς ἀναιρεθήσεται γενόμενος γυνή, καὶ βιασάμενος γυναῖκα [γυνὴ] ἔσται, ἵνα βιασθῇ. ὅθεν καὶ θεία φήμη Ἀδράστεια· αὕτη γὰρ ἡ διάταξις Ἀδράστεια ὄντως καὶ ὄντως Δίκη καὶ σοφία θαυμαστή.*

have purified ourselves sufficiently to transcend it in ineffable union with the One. Plotinus, also, would appear to believe in purgatorial states of punishment between lives for such souls as are especially vicious. Retribution for the sins committed in the body, he tells us, is ordinarily "to fall into other bodies and rise again after no long time according to righteous judgment. That this judgment is according to divine law is made plain by the word 'judgment.' But the immoderate kinds of evil demand a heavier punishment administered by avenging daemons."[1] But there is no insistence upon the horrors of hell like that which we find, for example, in Plutarch.

One or two further points may be noted in passing. In the first place there is what I will call the practice by the universe of a strict economy in vice. The world is so organized that the crimes of the wicked are not haphazard and wasted, but are impressed into the service of the divine justice. The victims of such crimes are not innocent, but deserve the violence to which they fall a prey. The murderer murders one who deserves to be killed, the thief robs one who is justly robbed of his gains.

At the same time in the qualification *ἀδίκως μὲν τῷ ποιήσαντι, αὐτῷ δὲ δικαίως τῷ παθόντι*,[2] Plotinus

[1] iv. 8, § 5 (473 c-d) [vol. ii. p. 149, l. 7 *et seq.*]. *εἰς σώματα ἄλλα δῦναι καὶ θᾶττον [ἐξαναδῦναι] ἐκ κρίσεως τῆς κατ' ἀξίαν—δ δὴ θεσμῷ θείῳ γιγνόμενον διὰ τοῦ τῆς κρίσεως ὀνόματος δηλοῦται—τὸ δὲ τῆς κακίας ἄμετρον εἶδος μείζονος καὶ τῆς δίκης ἠξίωται ἐπιστασίᾳ τιννυμένων δαιμόνων.*

[2] iii. 2, § 13 (264 d) [vol. i. p. 240, l. 32 *et seq.*].

avoids the objection that the criminal is justified since crime turns out to be just punishment. If Clytemnestra shall seek to exculpate herself, on the plea that she is merely a passive instrument in the hands of the curse of the house of Atreus visiting vengeance upon Agamemnon for the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, Plotinus will reply with the chorus that though the curse may have assisted at her deed, yet "who will witness that thou art guiltless of this crime?"[1] It may indeed have been right that Agamemnon should pay the penalty he did for his act, but Clytemnestra was none the less guilty. Her deed, though becoming part of the cycle of the avenging Ἄτη, was still the evidence of a sinful character. Nay, even supposing the divine justice directly to have inspired the deed, it could have effected its purpose only through the depravity of a nature open to evil suggestion. Clytemnestra could only become an accomplice in the workings of the curse by virtue of her evil propensities, for which she is responsible, and from which she cannot be excused; so in general in the case of any crime. Though the victim has rendered himself liable to it, and his suffering is a just retribution, the act is none the less conceived in sin by the agent, and justly exposes him to a similar penalty, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Secondly, we must not lose sight of the fact that though Plotinus does not develop the subject at any

[1] Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1497-1512.

length, he does point out that punishment is not merely vindictive, but remedial.[1] We are punished for our sins, indeed, but by our punishment we are purified from them. It is advantageous for us that we should suffer.

In the third place we may note how the existence of this law of Karma is made by Plotinus a new proof for the perfection of the world and of its providential government. The long passage from Plotinus last quoted is followed by a few sentences developing the argument from design as a witness to the divine goodness; and then is concluded as follows:—"That which changes does not change nor assume other forms at random, but rather so as to accord with beauty and as befits the work of divine powers. Everything divine works according to its nature, and its nature is what its essence makes it, and it is its essence which brings into action whatever is beautiful and just in its powers. For if beauty and justice are not in its essence, where else can they be?"[2]

There is, of course, a logical circle involved. The moral government of the world necessitates the assumption of the law of Karma. Karma thus assumed is then used to prove that there is a moral

[1] iv. 4, § 45 (440) [vol. ii. p. 101, l. 15].

[2] iii. 2, § 13 (265) [vol. i. p. 271, l. 21 *et seq.*]. *μετατίθεται τοίνυν τὰ μετατιθέμενα οὐκ εἰκῇ μετατιθέμενα οὐδ' ἄλλα σχήματα λαμβάνοντα, ἀλλ' ὡς καλόν, καὶ ὡς πρέποι ἂν δυνάμεσι θείαις ποιεῖν. ποιεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ θεῖον ὡς πέφυκε· πέφυκε δὲ κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ οὐσίαν· οὐσία δὲ αὐτοῦ, ἢ τὸ καλὸν ἐν ταῖς ἐνεργείαις αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ δίκαιον συνεκφέρει. εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἐκεῖ ταῦτα ποῦ ἂν εἴη;*

government of the world. But the circle is harmless since both members are proved otherwise as well.

Finally, we must remark that Plotinus faces and tries to solve a difficulty of considerable importance connected with the eschatology of the question. Given each soul as having its proper determining and individualizing Idea or Form laid up in the immutable archetypal world of νοῦς; given, moreover, each soul as essentially indifferent to and unaffected by outer events and actions, both of its own and of others, how can it change in such a way as the doctrine of Karma and transmigration demands? How can it change at all?

To follow Plotinus in his treatment of this difficulty will involve to some extent anticipation of further discussion, notably that of the part played by Matter in his system. Νοῦς, he tells us, is not present in animals at all, and unequally so in different men. It is only present in such natures as are conformable to it. The natures that are more conformable to it are obviously the good natures. That is, the good natures are those that most nearly realize their own Ideas, and rise into the intelligible world. Conversely, evil or imperfection will be a deficiency in the principle of νοῦς. In animals, which are purely natural beings, this deficiency is merely a normal imperfection of their natures. But in man, who is conscious of a rational vocation, this defect is a vice.

The change, then, for better or worse involved in

moral action and expressed by fortune and character in this world and the next, will be a change in the amount of νοῦς present.[1] But for this to vary, another principle must be present. "Whether our constitution is such that we fall, as it were, into a turbulent sea of passion, or whether our desires gain the mastery, the cause of this must be attributed to the substratum that lies within us. At first sight it will seem as if this lay not so much in (seminal) Reason as in Matter, and as if Matter and not Reason were supreme, and the substratum, after receiving its Form, came after it. But it is rather Reason and what has come into being out of and in accordance with Reason that is the original substratum. Hence Matter will not be supreme, and Form merely secondary. One might then refer a character of any sort to a former life, as though Reason had become feeble when compared with the prior Reason which produced it, just as the soul, after growing faint, may shine forth brightly in a subsequent life. We must also remark that (seminal) Reason contains within itself the principle of Matter, which it will work up for itself, having fashioned it in accordance with itself, or having found it consonant to itself. Thus the seminal reason of an ox is found only in the matter of an ox. Hence, [Plato] says, the soul may enter into other animals, and may be altered and its reason

[1] This discussion is founded on iii. 3, § 4 (273 D) [vol. i. p. 254, l. 15 *et seq.*].

changed, so that a soul which was once a man may become an ox. Wherefore there is justly an inferior seminal reason."[1]

This, it must be admitted, is very obscure. But may we not elucidate it somewhat as follows? Take the Idea of a man with a view to determining its content. Man is not a disembodied spirit or a pure reason, but a rational animal with body, passions, and parts. The Idea then of him, as every Idea represented in the phenomenal world, must contain some account of or reference to the sensible or phenomenal character of its object. His intelligible character is the intelligible character of a thing of sense. This reference of the Idea to the phenomenal characteristics of its particular, this "spiritual body" as we may call it, is "the form of the matter" included within the intelligible form, "which it will work up for itself, having fashioned it according to itself, or having found it consonant to itself." That is, "the

[1] iii. 3, § 4 (274 B) [vol. i. p. 255, l. 12 *et seq.*]. *εἴτε γὰρ ἡ σύστασις τοιαύτη, ὡς οἷον εἰς θολερὸν ἐμβάλλειν, εἴτε ἐπιθυμίαι κρατοῦσιν, ὅμως ἀνάγκη λέγειν ἐν τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ τὸ αἴτιον εἶναι. ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μὲν δόξει οὐκέτι ἐν τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ, καὶ ἡ ὕλη, οὐχ ὁ λόγος κρατήσει, εἶτα τὸ ὑποκείμενον ὡς πέπλασται. ἢ τὸ ὑποκείμενον τῇ ἀρχῇ ὁ λόγος ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ λόγου γενόμενον καὶ ὃν κατὰ τὸν λόγον· ὥστε οὐχ ἡ ὕλη κρατήσει, εἶτα ἡ πλάσις. καὶ τὸ τοιόνδε εἶναι ἐπὶ τὴν προτέραν βιοτὴν [ἂν] ἀνάγοι τις, οἷον γινομένου ἐκ τῶν προτέρων ἀμυδροῦ ὡς πρὸς τὸν πρὸ αὐτοῦ τοῦ λόγου· οἷον ψυχῆς ἀσθενεστέρας γενομένης, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ ἐκλάμψει. καὶ ὁ λόγος δὲ λεγέσθω ἔχειν καὶ τὸν λόγον αὖ ἐν αὑτῷ τῆς ὕλης, ἣν αὑτῷ ἐργάσεται ποιήσας καθ' αὑτὸν τὴν ὕλην ἢ σύμφωνον εὑρών. οὐ γὰρ ὁ τοῦ βοὸς λόγος ἐπ' ἄλλης ἢ βοὸς ὕλης· ὅθεν καὶ εἰς τὰ ἄλλα ζῷά φησιν εἰσκρίνεσθαι οἷον ἄλλης τῆς ψυχῆς γενομένης καὶ ἑτεροιωθέντος τοῦ λόγου, ἵνα γένηται ψυχὴ βοός, ἢ πρότερον ἦν ἄνθρωπος· ὥστε κατὰ δίκην ὁ χείρων.*

form of matter" is to all intents and purposes the seminal reason.

But his sensuous side man shares with the animals. He has animal functions and desires. The Idea, then, of his animal self will bear a close affinity to animal entelechies. Again, his empirical character is subject not merely to the passage of time, but to alterations in moral significance determined by the quality of the life he leads. And these alterations in moral significance will be reflected in the "spiritual body" of empirical tendencies and characteristics.

This "body" of tendencies as well as the intelligible character or form survives death, and forms the nucleus for the accretion of a new incarnate existence. It will naturally gather about itself "the matter it finds consonant to itself." If the empirical character has been a passably pure medium for the display of the individual entelechy, its concept will gather about it the material for a good man and a noble life. If this chance is improved, the next life will be still better, and so on, till finally the empirical character becomes absolutely transparent. Then by the identity of indiscernibles it becomes fused with the Idea of the individual. But that Idea has existed only as the Idea of an individual. Its absorption of its particular involves its own annihilation and absorption into the One.

On the other hand, an evil life may so influence the "Idea of matter" as to make it the nucleus for an evil character in the next existence. Accord-

ing as one or another passion is indulged or exalted, the Idea may even be so changed as to find its significance best expressed in the form of some animal entelechy in whom the passion is typified. The glutton may become a pig, the cheat a fox, for instance.

But at the same time the intelligible character, the Idea which is struggling to find expression, remains the same. We say, for example, of a man that he is a fox, or a pig, or an ox, meaning not that his essential character *qua* man is changed, but merely that his empirical self has so departed from its proper entelechy that it would be better expressed in other than human form. Plotinus is really making metaphysics of our metaphors.

This interpretation I put forward tentatively. It does not at all free the original passage from latent difficulties as regards the doctrine of Matter, and the old puzzle of grades of perfection. But as it stands it might serve Plotinus's immediate purpose. Change, Plotinus might point out, is a matter of the empirical character; but so is reincarnation, and so is moral life. Very likely he would have used the same illustration we employed. A man is a man, even if he has become so bestial that the body of a pig would be the most suitable expression of his proclivities.

Having armed himself with the Stoic doctrine that physical evil does not exist for the good man, and with the theories of Karma and transmigration,

Plotinus was in a position to deal with the apparently unjust apportionment of reward and merit in this world. But his treatment of the problem is confused. His beginning is straightforward enough. "It is rightly said as regards the injustice involved when the good receive an evil, the evil a good portion, that nothing is evil for the good man, nothing good for the evil." A wider question is concerned, however. The discrimination of the universe is at stake. "But why," Plotinus continues, "should that which is contrary to nature happen to the good, and that which is in accordance with nature to the evil? How can it be right that things should be thus allotted?" Plotinus replies by reiterating the first point. "If that which is in accordance with nature brings no addition to the happiness of the good man, and what is contrary to nature detracts nothing from the evil in evil men, what difference does it make which way things are apportioned? It is no more than if the evil man had a beautiful, the good man an ugly body.

"But if that were the case," it may be objected, "what is proper, reasonable, and just, which do not at present prevail, would prevail—and that would be the work of an excellent providence. But, indeed, that the wicked should be masters and lords of cities, and that the virtuous should be slaves would be in any case an unfitting thing, even supposing such mastery or slavery contributed nothing to the attainment of good or evil. As it is, a wicked

ruler can do the most lawless things. And the wicked can prevail in wars, and commit all kinds of shameful acts when they take captives. All such things raise doubts as to how they can happen if there be a Providence."[1]

We should now expect Plotinus to bring Karma and reincarnation to bear upon the problem. He might have pointed out that the apparent lack of discrimination by Nature is in reality a memory of the past lives of individuals. If things contrary to nature happen to the good man it is because he has sinned in past existences. By being good, by utilizing them as occasions for a display of fortitude and virtue, he can take away their sting and turn them to his advantage and improvement. The success of the sinner it would have been harder to justify. But Plotinus could have pointed again to the retribution which was to overtake him in a future incarnation.

He reverts, however, to the argument for kinds

[1] iii. 2, § 6 (259 D) [vol. i. p. 233, l. 14 *et seq.*]. 6. τὸ δὲ παρ' ἀξίαν, ὅταν ἀγαθοὶ κακὰ ἔχωσι, φαῦλοι δὲ τὰ ἐναντία, τὸ μὲν λέγειν ὡς οὐδὲν κακὸν τῷ ἀγαθῷ οὐδ' αὖ τῷ φαύλῳ ἀγαθὸν ὀρθῶς μὲν λέγεται· ἀλλὰ διὰ τί τὰ μὲν παρὰ φύσιν τούτῳ, τὰ δὲ κατὰ φύσιν τῷ πονηρῷ; πῶς γὰρ καλὸν νέμειν οὕτως; ἀλλ' εἰ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν οὐ ποιεῖ προσθήκην πρὸς τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν, οὐδ' αὖ τὸ παρὰ φύσιν ἀφαιρεῖ τοῦ κακοῦ τοῦ ἐν φαύλοις, τί διαφέρει τὸ οὕτως ἢ οὕτως; ὥσπερ οὐδέ, εἰ ὁ μὲν καλὸς τὸ σῶμα, ὁ δὲ αἰσχρός. ἀλλὰ τὸ πρέπον καὶ [τὸ] ἀνάλογον καὶ τὸ κατ' ἀξίαν ἐκείνως ἂν ἦν, ὃ νῦν οὐκ ἔστι· προνοίας δὲ ἀρίστης ἐκεῖνο ἦν. καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸ δεσπότας εἶναι καὶ ἄρχοντας τῶν πόλεων τοὺς κακούς, τοὺς δὲ ἐπιεικεῖς δούλους εἶναι, οὐ πρέποντα ἦν, οὐδ' εἰ προσθήκην ταῦτα μὴ φέρει εἰς ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ κτῆσιν. καίτοι καὶ τὰ ἀνομώτατα ἂν πράξειεν ἄρχων πονηρός· καὶ κρατοῦσι δὲ ἐν πολέμοις οἱ κακοὶ καὶ παντοῖα αἰσχρὰ δρῶσιν αἰχμαλώτους λαβόντες. πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα ἀπορεῖν ποιεῖ, ὅπως προνοίας οὔσης γίνεται.

of perfection. We must not expect of the material world the perfection of the intelligible prototype, just as we should not expect of the handsomest of particular men the perfection of the *beau ideal* of humanity.[1] Moreover, the rest of the world is so admirable an exponent of Providence that we had better take its ruling for granted in this particular case.[2] Again, man, even the best of men, is a deficient creature. If the just suffer, it is through the fault of their weakness. "Those who by evil-doing have nearly become irrational animals and wild beasts, drag the moderately good with them, and do them violence. These latter are better than their oppressors, but they are overcome by their inferiors in so far as they are themselves deficient; for they are not themselves good, and have not prepared themselves for suffering. . . .[3] Some are unarmed, but it is the armed who rule, whence it befits not God himself to fight in defence of unwarlike men. For the law says that they shall come safely out of war who have acquitted themselves like men, not those who merely pray. Nor is it fitting that those who pray should gather in the harvest, but those who till the earth; nor that they should be healthy who give no care to their health.

[1] iii. 2, § 7 (260 A–C) [vol. i. p. 234, l. 17 *et seq.*].

[2] iii. 2, § 7 (260 E–261 B) [vol. i. p. 235, l. 9 *et seq.*].

[3] iii. 2, § 8 (261 C-D) [vol. i. p. 236, l. 8 *et seq.*]. *οἱ δὴ κακυνθέντες εἰς τὸ ἐγγὺς ζῴων ἀλόγων καὶ θηρίων ἰέναι ἕλκουσι τοὺς μέσους καὶ βιάζονται· οἱ δὲ βελτίους μέν εἰσι τῶν βιαζομένων, κρατοῦνταί γε μὴν ὑπὸ τῶν χειρόνων ᾗ εἰσι χείρους καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀγαθοὶ οὐδὲ παρεσκεύασαν αὑτοὺς μὴ παθεῖν.*

One cannot complain if the wicked gather more harvest than is right for them, if it is they who till the ground entirely, or better than others. Moreover it is ridiculous for a man to perform all the other acts of life according to his own caprice (especially if his actions are not pleasing to the gods), and then expect to be saved by the gods, though he has done none of the things by means of which the gods bid men be saved. Verily, he were better dead than living thus, as the laws of the universe would not have him live. If all things were reversed and peace were kept in the midst of all follies and evils, then Providence might truly be called careless in suffering the worst to prevail. The wicked rule through lack of courage in the ruled. This is just; but that Providence should act recklessly would not be so."[1]

This is the extent of Plotinus's explicit treatment of the problem of the discrepancy between reward and merit. It needs, I think, no further elucidation.

[1] iii. 2, § 8 (261 c–262 c) [vol. i. p. 237, l. 2 *et seq.*]. *νῦν δὲ οἱ μὲν ἄοπλοι, οἱ δὲ ὁπλισθέντες κρατοῦσιν. ἔνθα οὐ θεὸν ἔδει ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀπολέμων αὐτὸν μάχεσθαι· σώζεσθαι γὰρ ἐκ πολέμων φησὶ δεῖν ὁ νόμος ἀνδριζομένους, ἀλλ' οὐκ εὐχομένους· οὐδὲ γὰρ κομίζεσθαι καρποὺς εὐχομένους, ἀλλὰ γῆς ἐπιμελουμένους, οὐδέ γε ὑγιαίνειν μὴ ὑγιείας ἐπιμελουμένους· οὐδ' ἀγανακτεῖν δεῖ, εἰ τοῖς φαύλοις πλείους γίνοιντο καρποὶ ἢ ὅλως αὐτοῖς γεωργοῦσιν ἢ ἄμεινον. ἔπειτα γελοῖον τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα τὰ κατὰ τὸν βίον γνώμῃ τῇ ἑαυτῶν πράττειν, κἂν μὴ ταύτῃ πράττωσιν, ᾗ θεοῖς φίλα, σώζεσθαι δὲ μόνον παρὰ θεῶν οὐδὲ ταῦτα ποιήσαντας, δι' ὧν κελεύουσιν αὐτοὺς οἱ θεοὶ σώζεσθαι. καὶ τοίνυν οἱ θάνατοι αὐτοῖς βελτίους ἢ τὸ οὕτως ζῶντας εἶναι, ὅπως ζῇν αὐτοὺς οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν οἱ ἐν τῷ παντὶ νόμοι· ὥστε τῶν ἐναντίων γιγνομένων, εἰρήνης ἐν ἀνοίαις καὶ κακίαις πάσαις φυλαττομένης, ἀμελῶς ἂν ἔσχε τὰ τῆς προνοίας ἐώσης κρατεῖν οὕτως τὰ χείρω. ἄρχουσι δὲ οἱ κακοὶ ἀρχομένων ἀνανδρίᾳ· τοῦτο γὰρ δίκαιον, καὶ οὐκ ἐκεῖνο.*

Its scantiness as regards what would seem to us the important points is disappointing, while it lingers at length over minor issues. But taken in connection with the development of the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation it gives us a sufficiently broad hint of Plotinus's mind as regards the question.

There is, however, a point, perhaps somewhat irrelevant, which we may be permitted to raise in passing. It would be interesting to know whether in his attack on the doctrine of passive resistance, Plotinus has the Christians in mind. Are they the little weaklings who, to use a Plotinian illustration, are beaten by the bigger and stronger bad boys, and robbed of their food and fine clothes, and, adds Plotinus, justly so suffer, "since they, though exercise-grounds are provided for them, by their sloth and their soft, luxurious life suffer themselves, fatted sheep that they are, to fall a prey to wolves"?[1] Their habit or theory of turning the other cheek might have drawn such a comparison from one bred in the other tradition. A somewhat similar passage may also have reference to the Christian doctrine of salvation. "That the wicked should expect others to be their saviours at the sacrifice of themselves is no fitting prayer for them to make. Nor is it to be expected that the gods should lay aside their own lives and rule the details of such men's lives, nor

[1] iii. 2, § 8 (261 E) [vol. i. p. 236, l. 21 *et seq.*]. *εἰ ἀποδεδειγμένων γυμνασίων αὐτοῖς οἱ δ' ὑπ' ἀργίας καὶ τοῦ ζῆν μαλακῶς καὶ ἀνειμένως περιεῖδον ἑαυτοὺς ἄρνας καταπιανθέντας λύκων ἁρπαγὰς εἶναι ;*

that good men, who are living a life that is other and better than that of human dominion, should devote themselves to the ruling of wicked men. For these latter have never seen to it that the good were rulers of others—a necessary condition to being themselves cared for by the good—but they look with jealous eyes upon any who happen to be good by nature. . . ."[1] The point, however, is open only to conjecture.

We may now regard the questions of physical evil and of the discrepancy between reward and merit as settled for the time being. Suffering is the wages of sin, and the universe, assuming transmigration and Karma, may be held to be in the long run a just paymaster. But the judicial analogy on which the argument rests fails to clear up the entire problem. If we stop to reflect we find that we are explaining away Evil by referring it to a system or concept which on analysis turns out to be both intrinsically deficient and, in the very possibility of its existence, a sign that things are not as they should be. For, supplemented by whatever hypothesis we please, human justice and its cosmic counterfeit in a providential government of the world cannot be

[1] iii. 2, § 9 (262 D-E) [vol. i. p. 238, l. 1 *et seq.*]. *κακοὺς δὲ γενομένους ἀξιοῦν ἄλλους αὐτῶν σωτῆρας εἶναι ἑαυτοὺς προεμένους οὐ θεμιτὸν εὐχὴν ποιουμένων· οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ θεοὺς αὐτῶν ἄρχειν τὰ καθέκαστα ἀφέντας τὸν ἑαυτῶν βίον οὐδέ γε τοὺς ἄνδρας τοὺς ἀγαθούς, ἄλλον βίον ζῶντας τὸν ἀρχῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἀμείνω, τούτους αὐτῶν ἄρχοντας εἶναι· ἐπεὶ οὐδ' αὐτοὶ ἐπεμελήθησάν ποτε, ὅπως ἄρχοντες ἀγαθοὶ γένοιντο τῶν ἄλλων, ὅπως αὐτοὶ εἶεν ἐπιμελούμενοι, ἀλλὰ φθονοῦσιν, ἐάν τις ἀγαθὸς παρ' αὐτοῦ φύηται.*

made wholly effective. To be perfect, the penalty should follow immediately upon the crime. The deed should bear no fruits to the evil-doer save the appropriate suffering. There should be no interval of peace, no prosperity, no success and domination. Were justice what we would have it, every criminal would be caught red-handed. That this is not the case is due to no deflection in its principle, but to obstacles which block the accomplishment of its requirements.

The same is true of the divine justice. Our failure is part of its failure. Its discrimination *ex hypothesi* is keener, its knowledge of men's hearts more perfect, its means more effective than our own, and yet it displays the same deficiencies. It does not fall upon the sinner at the moment of his crime; it delays and meantime he prospers. It can only preserve for us that purity of intention which our ideal of justice demands of it on the assumption that its tardiness also is due to obstacles that hinder its workings; that is, by regarding its manifestations not as the proof of a perfect, but as the symptom of an imperfect, world.

Supposing, however, that the workings of justice were perfect, the mere existence of justice would betray a defect in the universe. Justice is a relative, not an absolute perfection. It is an expedient forced upon men by the failure of their world to conform to their purpose. It can be no more or no less for God. God has to be just because there is

sin in the world. It is better that in such a world sin should be punished than not, but it would be still better that there should be no sin at all. To talk of the divine justice is to justify God's ways, only if we qualify it by the statement that those ways are not as he would have them, but are forced upon him by circumstances which he cannot control.

Moral evil remains unexplained and unmitigated to challenge the Plotinian theodicy. How is its existence to be reconciled with the goodness of God? We have seen what is the most obvious reply to this question, a reply as ancient as Homer and Hesiod in the annals of Greek thought, and as old as Adam in the record of the world's. It is to assume the responsibility oneself to declare man the reason for his own misdoing. But the thought is philosophically uncritical if it takes no account of its implicit assumptions and their problematic character. Rationally to entertain it one must first have considered and settled the difficult point of the freedom of the will.

The problem of determinism was as insistent in the Plotinian as it was in the Stoic philosophy. The trend of both systems was thoroughly deterministic. For the Stoic, Fate, Providence, Destiny were synonymous terms, and in the flawless chain of things in a single system of interdependent links every object seemed rigidly bound. The same is true of Plotinus's teaching. The primitive emanation from the One is no act of volition, but an event

conditioned by an inner necessity of its nature of which the One *qua* One is not even aware. The necessity that determined the existence of the world also determines its essence. Νοῦς is what it is because it is what the One could bring forth. Ψυχή is established in her nature by her connection with νοῦς. The structure of the universe is due to the interaction of the seminal reasons. All in all, the cosmic process, like the growth of a plant, is the mere unfolding of possibilities contained within the seed and determined by it.

On any one level of being the same determinism is displayed. Νοῦς is a closed, rigid system of Ideas that logically imply one another. By the same rigid implication the place and nature of each individual soul is determined in and by the World-Soul. So, too, the phenomenal world is held together and directed by a Providence innocent apparently of no event. "Do you say that Providence does not extend to earth?" Plotinus asks *à propos* of the existence and success of vicious action. "The fact that other things come into being by Reason is a proof that it extends to earth. Animals and plants share in reason and soul and life. But it may be said that though it extends to earth it does not rule there. Since, however, the universe is a single living being, that would be like saying that the head and face of a man are made by Nature and Reason, which has the power to rule, but the rest by other causes, chance or necessity, and so, owing to this

or to the impotence of Nature, are inferior. But it is neither pious nor reverent to find fault with creation on the ground that all is not well with such things."[1]

A universe so constituted apparently excluded the possibility of free will. Yet if God was to be justified, his providence had to be relieved of responsibility for human sin. Otherwise both providence and sin lost all moral character and significance. The one became, instead of a teleological principle, a mere natural law equally expressed in all events without regard to their ethical character; the other instead of a misdirection of the will, one manifestation thereof as appropriate as any other.

This difficulty was seen by Plotinus. On the one hand to preserve its own intrinsic character Providence had to be such that something was left for us to do. Else it had nothing to work upon, nothing to correct, no teleological function, and on the other hand "if men are involuntarily wicked and the wicked have no free will, then one should blame neither the evil-doers nor those who suffer evil, as suffering through their own fault. If it be necessary

[1] iii. 2, § 9 (262 c) [vol. i. p. 237, l. 22 *et seq.*]. ἆρ' οὖν, ὅτι μὴ μέχρι γῆς φθάνει; ἀλλὰ τῶν ἄλλων γινομένων λόγῳ μαρτύριον τοῦτο καὶ μέχρι γῆς ἰέναι· καὶ γὰρ ζῷα καὶ φυτὰ καὶ λόγου καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ ζωῆς μεταλαμβάνει. ἀλλὰ φθάνουσα οὐ κρατεῖ. ἀλλὰ ζῴου ἑνὸς ὄντος τοῦ παντὸς ὅμοιον ἂν γένοιτο, εἴ τις κεφαλὴν μὲν ἀνθρώπου καὶ πρόσωπον ὑπὸ φύσεως καὶ λόγου γίγνεσθαι λέγοι κρατοῦντος, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἄλλαις ἀναθείη αἰτίαις, τύχαις ἢ ἀνάγκαις, καὶ φαῦλα διὰ τοῦτο ἢ δι' ἀδυναμίαν φύσεως γεγονέναι. ἀλλ' οὔτε ὅσιον οὔτε εὐσεβὲς ἐνδόντας τὸ μὴ καλῶς ταῦτα ἔχειν καταμέμφεσθαι τῷ ποιήματι.

that evil men be produced either by the movement of the heavens or by some principle of which such production is a consequence, then their existence is according to nature. But if Reason itself be responsible, how can such a state of affairs not be unjust? Perhaps it may be said," he continues, apparently with the famous Platonic dictum in mind, "that the wicked act without willing it, since sin is involuntary. This, however, does not remove the fact that they themselves act of themselves, and in so acting sin, and would not have sinned at all if they were not the agents."[1]

In this last sentence we have the gist of an argument developed at some length by the Stoics. Its intention is to detach the notions of responsibility, praise, blame, and so on, from that of freedom. A man can be morally responsible for his act and yet not free. For what a man does is his act, whether or not he can act differently. As his deed, he is immediately responsible for it, and his merit or demerit depends not upon his freedom to act or not to act, but upon the character of what he does.[2]

[1] iii. 2, § 10 (263 B) [vol. i. p. 239, l. 4 *et seq.*]. 10. ἀλλ' *εἰ ἄνθρωποι ἄκοντές εἰσι κακοὶ καὶ τοιοῦτοι οὐχ ἑκόντες, οὔτ' ἄν τις τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας αἰτιάσαιτο, οὔτε τοὺς πάσχοντας ὡς δι' αὐτοὺς ταῦτα πάσχοντας. εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀνάγκη οὕτω κακοὺς γίνεσθαι εἴτε ὑπὸ τῆς φορᾶς εἴτε τῆς ἀρχῆς διδούσης τὸ ἀκόλουθον ἐντεῦθεν, φυσικῶς οὕτως. εἰ δὲ δὴ ὁ λόγος αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ ποιῶν, πῶς οὐκ ἄδικα οὕτως; ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἄκοντες, ὅτι ἁμαρτία ἀκούσιον· τοῦτο δὲ οὐκ ἀναιρεῖ τὸ αὐτοὺς τοὺς πράττοντας παρ' αὐτῶν εἶναι, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτοὶ ποιοῦσι, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτάνουσιν· ἢ οὐδ' ἂν ὅλως ἥμαρτον μὴ αὐτοὶ οἱ ποιοῦντες ὄντες.*

[2] Alexander, *De fato*, § 34.

We praise and reward the automaton that runs well and does the right things; we blame and punish that which is out of order and does wrong, especially if punishment has a deterrent and exemplary effect.

This argument naturally suggests its converse. The act is free if it is my act. My freedom means not that I could have acted differently, given all the circumstances, but that I must include myself among the circumstances from which the resultant act necessarily proceeds. I am an active centre having a proper nature, not a mere passive transmitter of external forces. To reaction the reagent contributes. This view was pressed by the Stoics. Plotinus also dwells upon it. Necessity is not mere outer necessity. "The motion of the heavens is not such as to leave nothing in our power."[1] In that case we should be mere puppets in their hands, should never express anything but the will of God. The truth is that "men are principles. They move toward the beautiful of their own nature, and this is a free and unconditioned principle."[2] They are living beings who "having unconditioned motion of themselves, incline now to the better, now to the worse."[3]

For Plotinus's final word, however, we had best

[1] iii. 2, § 10 (263 c) [vol. i. p. 239, l. 16]. *τὸ δὲ τῆς φορᾶς οὐχ ὥστε μηδὲν ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι.*

[2] iii. 2, § 10 (263 d) [vol. i. p. 239, l. 23 *et seq.*]. *ἀρχαὶ δὲ καὶ ἄνθρωποι. κινοῦνται γοῦν πρὸς τὰ καλὰ οἰκείᾳ φύσει καὶ ἀρχὴ αὕτη αὐτεξούσιος.*

[3] iii. 2, § 4 (258 d) [vol. i. p. 231, l. 26]. *τὰ δὲ δι' αὐτὰ ἔχοντα κίνησιν αὐτεξούσιον ζῷα ῥέποι ἂν ὁτὲ μὲν πρὸς τὰ βελτίω, ὁτὲ δὲ πρὸς τὰ χείρω.*

consult the Ennead *On Destiny.*[1] There the problem of freedom and determinism is taken up for itself, and not, as in the passages we have been discussing, as auxiliary to a theodicy. The Ennead opens with a distinction between things which have and which have not causes in the ordinary sense of the word. The eternal stands outside the causal nexus, but everything that "becomes" has a cause. In the natural world we can admit no chance or spontaneous action. "We must reject that which has no cause, admitting neither vain deflections[2] nor any sudden motion of the body which arises without any pre-existent cause, nor yet any random impulse of the soul without motive to excite it to do what it has not done before." Could the soul, Plotinus continues in a very modern manner, act without sufficient reason she would be the slave of even greater necessity, "through not belonging to herself and being the victim of unwilled and uncaused motions. Either what is willed, be it an outer or an inner object, or what is desired, moves her. If nothing desirable move her, then she would not be moved at all."[3]

[1] iii. 1. [2] Referring to the Epicureans.

[3] iii. 1, § 1 (228 c-D) [vol. i. p. 215, l. 17 *et seq.*]. *τὸ δὲ ἀναίτιον οὐ παραδεκτέον, οὔτε παρεγκλίσεσι κεναῖς χώραν διδόντα οὔτε κινήσει σωμάτων τῇ ἐξαίφνης, ἢ οὐδενὸς προηγησαμένου ὑπέστη, οὔτε ψυχῆς ὁρμῇ ἐμπλήκτῳ μηδενὸς κινήσαντος αὐτὴν εἰς τό τι πρᾶξαι ὧν πρότερον οὐκ ἐποίει. ἢ αὑτῷ γε τούτῳ μείζων ἄν τις ἔχοι αὐτὴν ἀνάγκη τῷ μὴ αὑτῆς εἶναι, φέρεσθαι δὲ τὰς τοιαύτας φορὰς ἀβουλήτους τε καὶ ἀναιτίους οὔσας. ἢ γὰρ τὸ βουλητόν—τοῦτο δὲ ἢ ἔξω ἢ εἴσω—ἢ τὸ ἐπιθυμητὸν ἐκίνησεν· ἤ, εἰ μηδὲν ὀρεκτὸν ἐκίνησεν, οὐδ' ἂν ὅλως ἐκινήθη.*

After examples of final and natural causation in connection with this point the treatise goes on to consider various theories of causation. These are roughly grouped as five,—atomistic, hylozistic, astrologistic, Heracleitean, and Stoic. To the Atomists Plotinus makes three objections. In the first place a fortuitous concourse of atoms by its very fortuitousness would render the category of causation inappropriate to it. It makes pure accident of what any theory of causation must regard as essential, *i.e.* the connected, reliable, and predictable character of events. In the second place, consciousness cannot be reduced to or deduced from atomic combinations. Thirdly, it destroys true freedom. The doctrine of the hylozoists Plotinus regards as open to the same objections.[1]

Against the Stoic and Heracleitean doctrines it is urged that the very rigidity of their determinism really destroys the significance of the causal nexus. It is not one part that is the cause of another, but the whole *qua* whole which determines the position of each and every part. But the whole in determining its parts is but determining itself. The whole is self-caused. And each part *qua* part of the whole is also self-caused. That is, it is not to be explained by any one part, or any complex of preceding parts, but merely by its place in the system as a whole, in other words, by itself. The transitive character of causation is arrested, its flow is frozen, its links

[1] iii. 1, § 3 (230 A–F) [vol. i. pp. 217-218].

are snapped, and we are left with a mere mosaic-like sequence or aggregate, each piece of which is held in position not by the other pieces, but by a common foundation to which all are fastened.[1]

Furthermore, the parts become mere modes or manifestations of the whole. The individualities of the many are lost. We are no longer ourselves. Our deeds and thoughts are not ours, but belong to the one thinker who directs us, just as we direct our members.[2] In such a system freedom of the will is a mere name and mockery. Our volitions are of a class with the instincts of animals, the impulses of madmen, nay with the tendencies of natural objects.[3] In that case the whole becomes the true author of our evil deeds. We must then work out some sort of theory in which each may retain his individuality and be responsible for his own character, be it good or bad.[3]

Plotinus next turns to the explanation of the astrologers by which our characters and deeds are referred to the influence of the stars. This theory beneath its fanciful garb concealed the main features of the ordinary notion of causation. It preserved the transitive character of the nexus, with its implication of the dependence of part upon part. The interdependence of all things Plotinus admits. It needs, however, a word of qualification. Stoicism has suppressed the transitive nature of causation,

[1] iii. 1, § 4 (231 c) [vol. i. p. 219, l. 31 *et seq.*].
[2] iii. 1, § 7 (233 c) [vol. i. p. 223, l. 4 *et seq.*].
[3] iii. 1, § 4 (231 c) [vol. i. p. 219, l. 27 *et seq.*].

disconnected part from part, and attached the parts to the nature of the whole and finally absorbed them in it. But an unmitigated transitiveness in causation is no less destructive to the individual. Nothing but the flux and the transitiveness remains. All the points of arrest are dissolved. If the world was before frozen stiff, it is now absolutely liquefied. It is a mass of connections with nothing to be connected.

The accidental astrologistic features of this theory of causation Plotinus quickly refutes. To say that the stars are the causes of earthly events is like saying that the omen is the cause of what it foretells. Again, if these are causes, how are we to deal with the other apparent causes of our characters and careers, like heredity and environment? Finally, the old difficulty of the problem of Evil appears. How can the stars which are gods and good forecast for us evil fates? Or how can their revolutions change their characters in such wise that they are now beneficent, now malignant in their workings? [1]

Against the transitive character of causation Plotinus reasserts the right of the individual. To make the stars responsible for our thoughts and actions is to make the stars like ourselves, and ourselves not like "men whose works are of and from their own natures," [2] but like stocks and stones. We, no less than they, or any outside force that infringes

[1] iii. 1, § 5 (232 B–233 C) [vol. i. p. 221, l. 10 *et seq.*]. Cf. iv. 4, § 31 (425).

[2] iii. 1, § 5 (231) [vol. i. p. 220, l. 25 *et seq.*] ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνθρώποις ἔχουσι παρ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῆς αὐτῶν φύσεως ἔργον.

upon us, have our proper nature and activities. We are not phantoms, but facts, not mere effects, but causes.[1]

The working out of the themes thus introduced is short. The clue to freedom is found in the individual and independent character of the soul. Among the forces of which a man's deed is the resultant we must count the soul as one. "The soul as another principle must be introduced amongst the things that are. I speak not merely of the World-Soul, but with her of the individual soul, as no small factor in the woof of all things. She does not, like other things, come into being from seeds, but is a primary cause. Apart from the body, she is mistress of herself, free, and independent of cosmic causation. But when joined with the body she is no longer mistress of herself in all respects, since she becomes part of an order together with other things. The chances which surround her and among which she has fallen, bring many things to pass in such wise that in part her actions are determined by them, in part she rules them and directs them whither she will. . . .

"If the soul, transformed by outer influences, commits actions or feels impulses in obedience, as it were, to a blind motion, she cannot be called free either in act or disposition. Nor can she be so called when in self-degradation she does not follow impulses that are in all respects right and authoritative. Only when the soul has reason pure and purged of passion

[1] iii. 1, § 5 (231 F *et seq.*) [vol. i. p. 220, l. 20 *et seq.*].

to guide her impulses, can the impulse be called our own and free. And that deed only can be called ours which came from nowhere save from within ourselves, from the pure soul, from a first principle that guides and rules, that errs not through ignorance, and yields not to the strength of desires—desires which at their coming lead and drag us down, and suffer not our deeds to be our own free actions, but only expressions of our passions."[1]

This passage might be recast almost in the very

[1] iii. 1, § 8 (223 E–234) [vol. i. p. 224, l. 2 *et seq.*]. *ψυχὴν δὴ δεῖ ἀρχὴν οὖσαν ἄλλην ἐπεισφέροντας εἰς τὰ ὄντα, οὐ μόνον τὴν τοῦ παντός, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἑκάστου μετὰ ταύτης, ὡς ἀρχῆς οὐ σμικρᾶς οὔσης, πλέκειν τὰ πάντα, οὐ γιγνομένης καὶ αὐτῆς, ὥσπερ τὰ ἄλλα, ἐκ σπερμάτων, ἀλλὰ πρωτουργοῦ αἰτίας οὔσης. ἄνευ μὲν οὖν σώματος οὖσα κυριωτάτη τε αὐτῆς καὶ ἐλευθέρα καὶ κοσμικῆς αἰτίας ἔξω· ἐνεχθεῖσα δὲ εἰς σῶμα οὐκέτι πάντα κυρία, ὡς ἂν μεθ' ἑτέρων ταχθεῖσα. τύχαι δὲ τὰ κύκλῳ πάντα, οἷς συνέπεσεν ἐλθοῦσα εἰς μέσον, τὰ πολλὰ ἤγαγον, ὥστε τὰ μὲν ποιεῖν διὰ ταῦτα, τὰ δὲ κρατοῦσαν αὐτὴν ταῦτα ὅπῃ ἐθέλει ἄγειν. πλείω δὲ κρατεῖ ἡ ἀμείνων, ἐλάττω δὲ ἡ χείρων. ἡ γὰρ κράσει σώματός τι ἐνδιδοῦσα ἐπιθυμεῖν ἢ ὀργίζεσθαι ἠνάγκασται ἢ πενίαις ταπεινὴ ἢ πλούτοις χαῦνος ἢ δυνάμεσι τύραννος. ἡ δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς τούτοις ἀντέσχεν, ἡ ἀγαθὴ τὴν φύσιν, καὶ ἠλλοίωσεν αὐτὰ μᾶλλον ἢ ἠλλοιώθη, ὥστε τὰ μὲν ἑτεροιῶσαι, τοῖς δὲ συγχωρῆσαι μὴ μετὰ κάκης. 9. ἀναγκαῖα μὲν οὖν ταῦτα, ὅσα προαιρέσει καὶ τύχαις κραθέντα γίνεται· τί γὰρ ἂν ἔτι καὶ ἄλλο εἴη; πάντων δὲ ληφθέντων τῶν αἰτίων πάντα πάντως γίνεται· ἐν τοῖς ἔξωθεν δὲ καὶ εἴ τι ἐκ τῆς φορᾶς συντελεῖται. ὅταν μὲν οὖν ἀλλοιωθεῖσα παρὰ τῶν ἔξω ψυχὴ πράττῃ τι καὶ ὁρμᾷ οἷον τυφλῇ τῇ φορᾷ χρωμένη, οὐχὶ ἑκούσιον τὴν πρᾶξιν οὐδὲ τὴν διάθεσιν λεκτέον· καὶ ὅταν αὐτὴ παρ' αὑτῆς χείρων οὖσα οὐκ ὀρθαῖς πανταχοῦ οὐδὲ ἡγεμονούσαις ταῖς ὁρμαῖς ᾗ χρωμένη. λόγον δὲ ὅταν ἡγεμόνα καθαρὸν καὶ ἀπαθῆ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἔχουσα ὁρμᾷ, ταύτην μόνην τὴν ὁρμὴν φατέον εἶναι ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ ἑκούσιον, καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ ἡμέτερον ἔργον, ὃ μὴ ἄλλοθεν ἦλθεν, ἀλλ' ἔνδοθεν ἀπὸ καθαρᾶς τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πρώτης ἡγουμένης καὶ κυρίας, ἀλλ' οὐ πλάνην ἐξ ἀγνοίας παθούσης ἢ ἥτταν ἐκ βίας ἐπιθυμιῶν, αἳ προσελθοῦσαι ἄγουσι καὶ ἕλκουσι καὶ οὐκέτι ἔργα ἑῶσιν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ παθήματα παρ' ἡμῶν.*

words, though not wholly perhaps in the thought, of Kant without any loss of fidelity to the sense of the original. Man, we might say, is a dual being living in a dual world. On the one hand he is a creature of sense implicated in the phenomenal order. On the other he is a rational principle, the member of a noumenal or intelligible world. So far as he is a creature of desire he is subject to the causal sequence from which no phenomenon is exempt. But though the position of phenomena in the phenomenal order is absolutely determined by their relations to antecedent and consequent, their existence and nature is not wholly explained by this determination. Each phenomenon is also the manifestation of a thing-in-itself or Idea or seminal reason, which ultimately determines it to be what it is, just as the organic union of these Ideas or *Dinge-an-sich* in an intelligible world constitutes the essence of the whole phenomenal order. This "epi-determination" of the phenomenon by its thing-in-itself, is a relation indescribable in terms of causation. In man we find it practically displayed as freedom of the will. The noumenal or intelligible character is seen as a rational will set over against the appetites and impulses of our phenomenal nature. This will is, or should be, independent of these appetites and impulses, and finds its motive and its law for action within itself. When the rational will acts in accordance with the dictates of its own nature it is free, when it follows the incitements of sense it is implicat-

ing itself in the causal nexus of the phenomenal order, and making of itself merely a link determined by its antecedents in the chain. That is, man is free so long as he acts like the rational being he essentially is, and not like the creature of irrational impulse which he is, as it were, by accident.[1] Freedom is the autonomy or self-legislation of the will.

As in Kant again, it is to the dual nature of man that sin is due. Either character taken by itself is incapable of wrong-doing. Beasts cannot sin; neither can gods. "Were man simple, and by simple I mean a mere generated product with his acts and passions determined by a single principle, there would be no cause for blaming him, any more than the other animals. But as it is, the evil man alone is in ill-repute and justly so. For he is not merely a product of generation, but he possesses another free principle. . . ."[2] But this free and rational principle, as we have seen, cannot sin so long as it acts in accordance with its own nature. Sin, then, has its occasion in a lack of compliance on the part of the desires with the rational will, strong enough in the case of the evil deed to overpower the will and prescribe action in its place. And this compliance, reluctant and slight though it may be at first, becomes with each repetition more easy till finally the bad habit is formed and the evil propensity becomes dominant.[3]

[1] iii. 1, § 8 (234 A-B) [vol. i. p. 224, l. 14 *et seq.*].
[2] iii. 3, § 4.
[3] iii. 2, § 4 (258 D) [vol. i. p. 231, l. 30 *et seq.*].

At this juncture, however, Plotinus was like to be hoist with his own petard. Providence might indeed to the cursory glance seem acquitted of complicity with Evil. But did not the evidence in its favour at the same time deprive it of any hand in the good? The will is the source of its own determinations to good or ill. Providence has no more to do with the one than with the other. It is not for the saints to cry "*non nobis, non nobis*," but for God to say "*non mihi, non mihi.*"

Plotinus sees his danger. "Is it not absurd," he asks, "to introduce souls, some as workers of evil, others as workers of good? Do we not take from Reason responsibility for good, in removing evil from its sphere?" The answer he gives at the time is an appeal to the dramatic analogy, in an extensive development of which he is at the moment occupied. "What is there to prevent the deeds of actors, be they good or evil, from forming parts of the World-Reason, just as they do of the plot in a play, so that its influence is exercised upon each individual actor in proportion as the drama is the more perfect and wholly depends upon it? But for what purpose should the World-Reason do evil?"[1]

[1] iii. 2, § 18 (271 A-B) [vol. i. p. 251, l. 1 *et seq.*]. *εἰ οὖν ἄτοπος ἡ εἰσαγωγὴ τῶν ψυχῶν, αἳ δὴ τὰ πονηρά, αἱ δὲ τὰ χρηστὰ ἐργάσονται —ἀποστερήσομεν γὰρ τὸν λόγον καὶ τῶν χρηστῶν ἀφαιροῦντες αὐτοῦ τὰ πονηρά—τί κωλύει καὶ τὰ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν ἔργα μέρη ποιεῖν, ὥσπερ τοῦ δράματος ἐκεῖ, οὕτω καὶ τοῦ ἐν τῷ παντὶ λόγου, καὶ ἐνταῦθα καὶ τὸ καλῶς καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον, ὥστε εἰς ἕκαστον τῶν ὑποκριτῶν οὕτω παρ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ λόγου, ὅσῳ τελειότερον τοῦτο τὸ δρᾶμα καὶ πάντα παρ' αὐτοῦ; ἀλλὰ τὸ κακὸν ποιῆσαι ἵνα τί;*

Plotinus makes his meaning more clear in a long passage, with a synopsis of which I will content myself. What is pleasing to the gods, he says, is a consequence of Providence, since Providence means the expression of the divine in the world. That is, the good deed is interconnected with, but is not done by Providence. Its source is man or any other object you please, but in so far as it is good it becomes part of the providential plan or order. Evil is an effect necessitated by a cause indeed, but by a cause not implicated in the providential order, but found in ourselves, and expressing not the divine purpose, but our lack of conformity to it. Providence overcomes Evil, however, healing its breaches and turning it to good, just as the healthy body heals a wound or an injury and brings the part again into harmony with the organism.[1]

As a recapitulation we may take the following. "The deed of the intemperate man is done neither by nor according to Providence, while the deed of the temperate man, though it be not done by Providence (for it is done by the man), is yet done according to Providence."[2]

In a word, Plotinus distinguishes between things done *by* Providence (ὑπὸ προνοίας) and *according to* Providence (κατὰ πρόνοιαν). God's will, if I may use

[1] iii. 3, § 5 (275 C–E) [vol. i. p. 257, l. 1 *et seq.*].

[2] iii. 3, § 5 (275 F) [vol. i. p. 258, l. 1 *et seq.*]. καὶ παρὰ μὲν τοῦ ἀκολάστου τὸ πραχθὲν οὔτε ὑπὸ προνοίας οὔτε κατὰ πρόνοιαν, τὸ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ σώφρονος ἔργον οὐχ ὑπὸ προνοίας μέν, ὅτι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, κατὰ πρόνοιαν δέ.

the expression in connection with Plotinus, is not the source of our will, but provides merely the standard. The will determines itself. Its dignity, however, does not lie in the mere fact of self-determination, but in the direction which that determination takes. It finds its good and acquires its value by conforming itself to the divine standard. Were there no Providence, no teleological and rational order in the world, the character of the determinations of the will would be metaphysically indifferent (though significant enough from the purely human point of view), and its deeds mere explosions of natural forces. The will of God, then, by providing the conditions under which alone the will's choice of the good has cosmic significance, is a true coefficient in the good deed; while at the same time since it does not in any way determine the will in its choice, it is not an accomplice in evil.

But we avoid this difficulty only to meet with other and more serious objections. Who, we may ask, or what is really *responsible* for sin in such a theory? Is it my animal nature? But my animal nature is part of the causal sequence. Then my sin is determined by antecedent events and I am not to blame. More briefly we might say, if I am not free when I sin (as Plotinus and Kant say I am not), then I am not responsible.

Suppose, however, that I am free when I sin. That implies a self-determined acquiescence in the lower impulse on the part of the natural will. But

the will cannot determine itself to other than the good. When it wills the bad it is not acting according to its own nature, but under the compulsion of the sensible impulse. Apparently, then, I am responsible in neither case.

Finally, if neither my animal nature, nor my intelligible character *per se*, is capable of sin, it is difficult to see how their conjunction should make sin possible.

These difficulties Plotinus shares in common with Kant, and explains them as little. But he also is beset with others of a metaphysical character, which Kant has shirked. Kant left the noumenal order in that happy vagueness which characterizes the smile without the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland*. One had the practical certainty that it concealed God, Freedom, and Immortality, and was forbidden and saved the trouble of conceiving their features. For Plotinus, however, the cat declined to disappear, and he had to prove that it smiled. Thus the freedom of the will was not established by merely withdrawing its province from the phenomenal order. It is still not outside Providence and the universal Reason.[1] "Although I am master of my choice of this or that, still the choice has its place in the order of the universe, since your character is not adventitious to the universe, but you are reckoned in it as a definite individual."[2] This, however,

[1] iii. 3, § 4 (273 E) [vol. i. p. 254, l. 21].

[2] iii. 3, § 3 (272 D-E) [vol. i. p. 253, l. 4 *et seq.*]. 3. καὶ γὰρ εἰ ἐγὼ κύριος τοῦ τάδε ἐλέσθαι ἢ τάδε, ἀλλὰ αἱρέσει συντέτακται, ὅτι μὴ ἐπεισόδιον τὸ σὸν τῷ παντί, ἀλλ' ἠρίθμησαι ὁ τοιόσδε.

brings up the question—a question which Kant also had to face[1]—who is responsible for my intelligible self? "Are we to refer the cause of the moral character of the individual to the creator, if there be one, or to the creature itself?"

Plotinus's reply is unsatisfactory. He appeals again to the utterly irrelevant theory of varieties of perfection. The real point at issue is not touched. For him the important thing is that "God is no more to be blamed for what we are, than for what plants are. We do not blame him because they have not the faculty of perception, or because other animals are not as men."[2] And he adds, we are not to be blamed either for our natures, apparently on the ground that we are but human, and that of humanity not even its proper virtue can be demanded.

The argument is beside the point. The particular question with which it is designed to deal is left without an answer. So, also, in the last resort is the general question of freedom and determinism. To disengage the will from the causal nexus of phenomena is merely to assert its freedom from phenomenal determination. But that freedom had still to be reconciled with the necessity of the

[1] Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pract. Reason*, Abbott's Trans. p. 194.

[2] iii. 3, § 3 (272 E) [vol. i. p. 253, l. 7 *et seq.*]. ἀλλὰ πόθεν ὁ τοιόσδε; ἔστι δὲ δύο, ἃ ὁ λόγος ζητεῖ, τὸ μέν, εἰ ἐπὶ τὸν ποιήσαντα, εἴ τις ἐστίν, ἀνενεγκεῖν δεῖ τοῦ ποιοῦ τοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἤθεσιν ἑκάστου τὴν αἰτίαν, ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ γενόμενον αὐτό, ἢ ὅλως οὐκ αἰτιατέον, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ φυτῶν γενέσεως, ὅτι μὴ αἰσθάνεται, ἢ ἐπὶ ζῴων τῶν ἄλλων, ὅτι μὴ ὡς ἄνθρωποι ἔχουσι· ταὐτὸν γὰρ τοῦτο τῷ διὰ τί ἄνθρωποι οὐχ ὅπερ θεοί.

emanatory process. Of this problem Plotinus offers no solution. There were, indeed, two possible methods of dealing with the question. He might have maintained that the necessity which directs the radiation of Being from the One is merely an emphatic equivalent for saying that Being is what it is. This is the world we actually find; the world is necessarily what we find it. If this world contains free wills, then it is necessary that there should be freedom. Or he might have explicitly limited to the phenomenal order the antithesis between freedom and necessity, and the universe of discourse in which the terms were significant. In that case the process of emanation from the One would have been neither free nor determined. The two categories would have been mere symbols, the best expression we had at our command to describe the indescribable, applicable only by a philosophic licence, and with philosophic reservations. He might, moreover, have dispensed with the aid of mysticism in defending his position. On the merely phenomenal level, he might have said, the antinomy is not conclusive. We now oppose freedom to necessity because the will is discordant both with itself and with other wills. In a world where every volition expressed the complete will, and that so as to accord with the self-expression of all other wills, *E fallo fora non fare a suo senno*, the antithesis would have no practical significance to the perfected will. To talk of freedom and

necessity would be meaningless jargon. The words would stand for nothing in its universe. Its volitions would be all their own *raisons d'être*. It could not occur to it to ask itself *why* it acted as it did. The question, that is, would have no value for it. For in a perfect world it would make not the slightest difference whether it acted as if it were free or determined.

There is something to be said for endeavouring to interpret the Plotinian position in the light of this thought. The primitive emanation from the One is not a free act since the One is not aware of it. It is not a determined act because nothing determines the One to it. It is neither free nor determined in the ordinary use of the terms. So too νοῦς gives off ψυχή, and ψυχή the world, because it must indeed, but because it must in the same sense as the free spirit in Paradise *must* will the good.[1] Whether we call the process free or determined is of no practical significance as yet. It only becomes so when in the phenomenal world the Idea or seminal reason finds itself confronted with a medium recalcitrant to its self-expression. Then so far as its acts express its rational nature and purpose, it calls them free; so far as they are distorted by this recalcitrancy it calls them not free.

Still, this is a digression. We can only accept as we find it the Plotinian inconclusiveness as regards this deeper aspect of the question. The problem we must leave with him unsolved, and pass on.

[1] Cf. iv. 3, § 13 (382 E).

We come now to a series of arguments which try to find a positive place for Evil in a perfect universe. Needless to say they are as applicable to the existence of physical, as to moral evil. First, we note an argument already touched upon a few lines back. "In every creature," we are informed, "the upper parts, as the face and head, are more beautiful than the middle and lower parts. Now men are in the middle and lower parts of the universe, whilst above are the heavens, and the gods that dwell therein. . . . We wonder at the wickedness among men, because we think man is the important thing in the universe, and that none is wiser than he. But man's place is midway between god and brute; and he inclines towards both. Some men are like the one, some like the other, but most lie between."[1]

In a word, because man is only man he cannot reasonably be expected to be a good man. This argument is no more than an application to moral evil of that clever justification of the particular's failure to embody its proper ideals, which we have already discussed at some length. Once more we

[1] iii. 2, § 8 (261 B-C) [vol. i. p. 235, l. 29 *et seq.*]. 8. *παντὸς δὴ ζῴου τὰ μὲν ἄνω, πρόσωπον καὶ κεφαλή, καλλίω, τὰ δὲ μέσα καὶ κάτω οὐκ ἴσα· ἄνθρωποι δὲ ἐν μέσῳ καὶ κάτω, ἄνω δὲ οὐρανὸς καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτῷ θεοί· καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον τοῦ κόσμου θεοὶ καὶ οὐρανὸς πᾶς κύκλῳ, γῆ δὲ οἷα κέντρον καὶ ὡς ἕν τι τῶν ἄστρων. θαυμάζεται δὲ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀδικία, ὅτι ἄνθρωπον ἀξιοῦσιν ἐν τῷ παντὶ τὸ τίμιον εἶναι ὡς οὐδενὸς ὄντος σοφωτέρου. τὸ δὲ κεῖται ἐν μέσῳ θεῶν καὶ θηρίων καὶ ῥέπει ἐπ' ἄμφω καὶ ὁμοιοῦνται οἱ μὲν τῷ ἑτέρῳ, οἱ δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ, οἱ δὲ μεταξύ εἰσιν, οἱ πολλοί.*

may remark the *reductio ad absurdum* of the doctrine which holds that various kinds can be graded as different degrees of perfection.

There follow a number of arguments of more decidedly Stoic complexion. In the first place, we find the familiar contention that though the parts may seem imperfect taken by themselves, yet in conjunction with one another they form a perfect whole.[1] Though different, each has its proper function which is necessary to the well-being, and therefore contributes to the perfection of the whole. The universe is like an organism "in which although the feet do one thing, the eyes another, the understanding another, and the mind yet another, unity arises from them all,"[2] and "from all the tones, all the passions, and all the energies, there comes, as it were, the one tone of the living being, one life and existence."[3] We are reminded of the dictum of Chrysippus: "The world is a perfect body, but the parts of the world are not perfect since they exist relatively to the whole and are not self-subsistent."[4]

Secondly, we may note an attempt to illustrate

[1] iii. 2, § 3 (256 F-G) [vol. i. p. 229, l. 12 *et seq.*].

[2] iii. 3, § 5 (275 B) [vol. i. p. 256, l. 27 *et seq.*].

[3] iii. 3, § 5 (275 A) [vol. i. p. 256, l. 23 *et seq.*]. 2, 3. *καὶ δὴ καὶ οὑτωσὶ πληγέντα οὕτως ἐφθέγξατο τὰ φωνήεντα, τὰ δὲ σιωπῇ πάσχει καὶ κινεῖται τὰ ἀκόλουθα, καὶ ἐκ τῶν φθόγγων ἁπάντων καὶ ἐκ τῶν παθημάτων καὶ ἐνεργημάτων μία τοῦ ζῴου οἷον φωνὴ καὶ ζωὴ καὶ βίος. καὶ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μόρια διάφορα ὄντα καὶ διάφορον τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἔχοντα· ἄλλο γὰρ ποιοῦσι πόδες, ὀφθαλμοὶ δ' ἄλλο, διάνοια δὲ ἄλλο καὶ νοῦς ἄλλο. ἓν δὲ ἐκ πάντων καὶ πρόνοια μία.*

[4] Plutarch, *De Stoicorum repugnantibus*, 44. 6.

this point in the case of wickedness. Not only is good produced by it accidentally, as when healthy children and perhaps good men are born of adultery or rape, or finer cities rise on the ashes of those sacked by evil-doers,[1] but its vicious character itself has its function and place in the economy of the whole. The passage follows one in which we have already seen how Plotinus, like Seneca,[2] justifies misfortune on the ground of its disciplinary and corrective, as well as its retributive character. "Vice," he says, "works to the advantage of the whole in that it furnishes an example for justice and produces much that is serviceable. It stirs men up and rouses the mind and the understanding by confronting them with evil ways. It makes men learn how great and good is virtue when contrasted with the evils which are the lot of the wicked."[3]

But Plotinus will not let the argument go at this. He develops and expands it, interweaving with it the notion of the interdependence of opposites and illustrating both with various analogies. In this development he is by no means consistent, but is continually qualifying what he says. It will be better, however, for us to ignore for the present these

[1] iii. 2, § 18 (270 C) [vol. i. p. 250, l. 27 *et seq.*].

[2] Cf. Seneca's treatise, *De Providentia*.

[3] iii. 2, § 5 (259 A-B) [vol. i. p. 232, l. 26 *et seq.*]. ἡ δὲ κακία εἰργάσατό τι χρήσιμον εἰς τὸ ὅλον παράδειγμα δίκης γενομένη καὶ πολλὰ ἐξ αὐτῆς χρήσιμα παρασχομένη. καὶ γὰρ ἐγρηγορότας ἐποίησε καὶ νοῦν καὶ σύνεσιν ἐγείρει πονηρίας ὁδοῖς ἀντιταττομένων, καὶ μανθάνειν δὲ ποιεῖ οἷον ἀγαθὸν ἀρετὴ παραθέσει κακῶν ὧν οἱ πονηροὶ ἔχουσι.

self-corrections, picking out and stringing together such passages as are homogeneous and support a single thesis. We can then return and make use of the qualifications as a natural transition to another chapter of our essay.

The thesis which for the present we are to illustrate and discuss is this:—the rationality and perfection of the world may, nay must, include what we call evil, both physical and moral.

"The seminal reason," begins Plotinus, vacillating once more, as we note, between kinds and grades of perfection, "brings all these things to pass in the course of its rule, and wills them to be what they are, making so-called evils accordant with Reason. It does not will that all things should be good [*i.e.* of one kind or degree of good], any more than an artist would make an animal all eye. So Reason does not make all things gods, but some it makes gods, others daemons,—a second nature,—then men, and then animals in due order. This it does not from jealousy, but because there is within Reason itself variety of intelligibles. We, on the other hand, are like those who know nothing about the art of painting, and find fault because the colours are not everywhere beautiful, though the painter has given to each part of the picture the colour appropriate to it. Or again we are like those who find fault with a play because the characters in it are not all heroes, but some slaves, and rustics, and rough-speaking fellows. But here, too, the play would not be beautiful

if one were to remove the meaner characters and the parts they play." [1]

The dramatic, or perhaps we should say, the aesthetic analogy, since other than purely dramatic versions of it are introduced, is worked out at great length; at such great length indeed that we cannot follow it in translation, but must be content with considerable abbreviation and synopsis. Although the parts of the world are hostile to one another, yet they are one, just as the play is one whose plot involves the hostility of many of its characters. Better still, the world is like the musical harmony which is composed of different and opposing tones. Just as the existence of the harmony is conditioned by the difference and opposition of its elements, so if Reason were not a manifold—though plurality implies opposition—it would not be Reason.[2] How much more sharply will these differences be accentuated on the phenomenal plane in the physical world!

Let us now apply the analogy to the specific case of sin. The opposition between good and evil is

[1] iii. 2, § 11 (263 E–264 A) [vol. i. p. 239, l. 28 *et seq.*]. 11. ἀλλ' ὁ λόγος ταῦτα πάντα ποιεῖ ἄρχων καὶ οὕτω βούλεται καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα κακὰ αὐτὸς κατὰ λόγον ποιεῖ οὐ βουλόμενος πάντα ἀγαθὰ εἶναι, ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις τεχνίτης οὐ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ ζῴῳ ὀφθαλμοὺς ποιοῖ· οὕτως οὐδ' ὁ λόγος πάντα θεοὺς εἰργάζετο, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν θεούς, τὰ δὲ δαίμονας, δευτέραν φύσιν, εἶτα ἀνθρώπους καὶ ζῷα ἐφεξῆς, οὐ φθόνῳ, ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ποικιλίαν νοερὰν ἔχοντι. ἡμεῖς δέ, ὥσπερ οἱ ἄπειροι γραφικῆς τέχνης αἰτιῶνται, ὡς οὐ καλὰ τὰ χρώματα πανταχοῦ, ὁ δὲ ἄρα τὰ προσήκοντα ἀπέδωκεν ἑκάστῳ τόπῳ· ἢ εἴ τις δρᾶμα μέμφοιτο, ὅτι μὴ πάντες ἥρωες ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἰκέτης καὶ τις ἄγροικος καὶ φαύλως φθεγγόμενος· τὸ δὲ οὐ καλόν ἐστιν, εἴ τις τοὺς χείρους ἐξέλοι, καὶ ἐκ τούτων συμπληρούμενον.

[2] iii. 2, § 16 (268 A–E) [vol. i. p. 246, l. 10 *et seq.*].

like the strophe and the antistrophe of the chorus. Both contribute to the beauty of the dance. Does one object that then sinners are not really wicked? Certainly they are. The explanation involves a qualification into which we cannot now enter, but given the fact of sin, the sinner is given his appropriate place in the dance, or rôle in the play. In the playwright's work the actor is assigned his lines—heroic or villainous according to his temperament; in the world-drama the soul is one of the players, and receives a part from the poet consonant with her nature. This nature she has before the play begins. If her voice and form are beautiful she enhances the piece, if they are ugly they may displease, but they do not detract from the perfection of the plot and the general conception of the drama. At the same time the playwright is right in rebuking the poor actor and in assigning to him inferior parts which are better fitted to his abilities. It is the soul's fault if she does not choose or if she is not fitted to enact a virtuous part. And it is with equal justice that the man who chooses and lives up to the noble rôle is promoted and rewarded.[1]

In this wise sinners are harmonized with the World-Reason. For, as is meet, everything is harmonious to the part it receives, as each single string of a lyre is stretched in its proper and fitting place with reference both to the tone of the instrument and to its own strength. The world, then, is

[1] iii. 2, § 17 (268 E–269 C) [vol. i. p. 247, l. 6 *et seq.*].

perfect if everything has its place in it. Indeed, Tartarus and outer darkness have their function in it, and it is well that their tone in the universal harmony should be deep and harsh.

Again, just as in a shepherd's pipe there is not merely one note, but several, both stronger and weaker, yet all contributory to the sound of the whole, so there are different places in the universe, better and worse, filled by souls of different degrees of virtue which by their very differences enhance the perfection of the whole. What to them is evil is good for the whole, what to them is contrary to nature is for it natural. They are none the less inferior, but their inferiority does not vitiate the goodness of the universe. After all, the ignominy of the hangman does not make a well-governed state the worse. He has his use.[1]

Finally, the interdependence of contraries is explicitly proclaimed. "As some things are better, so some things must be worse. For how, where there is to be variety, can there be anything that is worse without something that is better, or anything that is better without something that is worse? One must not, then, blame what is worse in the better, but be contented with the better in that it has given of itself to the worse. They who demand that the worse should be abolished altogether in the universe, abolish Providence itself. If there is to be no evil, against what shall Providence provide?

[1] iii. 2, § 17 (269 G–275 G) [vol. i. p. 249, l. 9 *et seq.*].

Certainly not for itself nor for that which is better." [1] In other words, Plotinus agrees with the author of the Epistle to the Romans that "where sin abounded grace did much more abound."

These arguments are familiar enough. Amplified and improved they are still the heavy artillery of ethical monism. Were they all or even the main portion of Plotinus's battery we might stop to direct our fire against them, and silence them if possible. But it is scarcely worth while to attack what is for him a secondary battery, and so trained at that, that it threatens himself more than his critics. For every one of the passages which we have discussed is contradicted or at least qualified by others in such a way as to remove him for the present from the ranks of the ethical monists.

The nature of the qualification made by Plotinus was hinted at above, when in discussing his attempt to explain the possibility of transmigration we noted references to a material principle other than, and in some measure opposed to, the activity of the soul. Let us now take Plotinus's self-corrections in this respect, as we took the other arguments, one by one.

First, we may note a qualification of the argu-

[1] iii. 3, § 7 (276 G) [vol. i. p. 259, l. 24 *et seq.*]. 4. *καὶ ὅτι δὲ τὰ βελτίω, καὶ τὰ χείρω. ἐπεὶ πῶς ἂν εἴη τι χεῖρον ἐν πολυειδεῖ μὴ ὄντος βελτίονος, ἢ πῶς τὸ βέλτιον μὴ χείρονος; ὥστε οὐκ αἰτιατέον τὸ χεῖρον ἐν τῷ βελτίονι, ἀλλὰ ἀποδεκτέον τὸ βέλτιον, ὅτι ἔδωκεν ἑαυτοῦ τῷ χείρονι. ὅλως δὲ οἱ ἀναιρεῖν ἀξιοῦντες τὸ χεῖρον ἐν τῷ παντὶ ἀναιροῦσι πρόνοιαν αὐτήν. τίνος γὰρ ἔσται; οὐ γὰρ δὴ αὐτῆς οὐδὲ τοῦ βελτίονος.*

ment that the universe is better for being so ordered as to punish sinners. "Evil-doers are punished by being corrupted in their souls through evil activities, and by being assigned to an inferior position in the world. For nothing can ever escape the lot assigned to it by the law of the universe." But Plotinus warns us. "Order does not exist because of disorder, nor justice because of injustice in the sense, as a man may think, of existing for the sake of being created and made manifest by the worse qualities. On the contrary, order and justice are the result of an order coming from above. Disorder exists because there is order and on account of law and reason, and lawlessness and irrationality exist because there is Reason, not because the better produces the worse, but because that which ought to receive the better is not able to receive it either through its own nature, or by chance, and because there are other things to prevent it."[1]

In fine we have here an admission that Evil does not contribute anything to the law and proportion and order of the universe. It rather exists as a residuum of lawlessness and disorder, due to

[1] iii. 2, § 4 (258 A-C) [vol. i. p. 231, l. 11 *et seq.*]. *ἴσχουσι δὲ ἀδικοῦντες δίκας κακυνόμενοί τε ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐνεργείαις κακίας ταττόμενοί τε εἰς τόπον χείρονα· οὐ γὰρ μήποτε ἐκφύγῃ μηδὲν τὸ ταχθὲν ἐν τῷ τοῦ παντὸς νόμῳ. ἔστι δὲ οὐ διὰ τὴν ἀταξίαν τάξις οὐδὲ διὰ τὴν ἀνομίαν νόμος, ὥς τις οἴεται, ἵνα γένοιτο ἐκεῖνα διὰ τὰ χείρω καὶ ἵνα φαίνοιτο, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν τάξιν ἐπακτὸν οὖσαν· καὶ ὅτι τάξις ἀταξία καὶ διὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τὸν λόγον, καὶ ὅτι λόγος παρανομία καὶ ἄνοια οὐ τῶν βελτιόνων τὰ χείρω πεπνιηκότων, ἀλλὰ τῶν δέχεσθαι δεομένων τὰ ἀμείνω φύσει τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἢ συντυχίᾳ καὶ κωλύσει ἄλλων δέξασθαι οὐ δεδυνημένων.*

the fact that because of a recalcitrancy in things, law and order cannot gain full ascendancy.

In the same way Plotinus qualifies his argument that Evil is used for the best in the economy of the world, in that vice, for example, serves as a stimulus to virtue, and as a contrast by which its goodness is heightened. "But," the correction runs, "Evil does not exist for the purpose of enhancing the Good by contrast. As I have said, I mean only that when it occurs Reason employs it to serve its needs. It is a sign of the greatest power to be able to turn Evil to good account, and when formless things come into being to be able to apply them to the service of other forms. Generally speaking, Evil must be defined as a lack of good. There must necessarily be a lack of good in this world, since the Good exists here as in an alien world. This other medium in which the Good exists, being different from the Good, is responsible for the lack of good, for this other medium is not good. Evil cannot be destroyed because, when judged by the nature of the Good, one thing is inferior to another, and other things, though they take the cause of their being from the Good, are different from it, and are rendered imperfect by their distance from it."[1]

The first part of the passage merely repeats the

[1] iii. 2, § 5 (259 B–D) [vol. i. p. 232, l. 32 *et seq.*]. *καὶ οὐ γέγονε τὰ κακὰ διὰ ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ ὅτι χρῆται καὶ αὐτοῖς εἰς δέον, ἐπείπερ ἐγένετο, εἴρηται. τοῦτο δὲ δυνάμεως μεγίστης, καλῶς καὶ τοῖς κακοῖς χρῆσθαι δύνασθαι καὶ τοῖς ἀμόρφοις γενομένοις εἰς ἑτέρας μορφὰς χρῆσθαι ἱκανὴν εἶναι. ὅλως δὲ τὸ κακὸν ἔλλειψιν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θετέον·*

assertion that evil does not make good better, and that the Good makes the best of the evil it finds opposed to it. In the latter half, Plotinus has apparently the Platonic dictum in the *Theaetetus* in mind, and interprets it in the light of his emanation theory, turning for the moment what he elsewhere regards as grades of perfection into grades of imperfection. Incidentally, he once more betrays the fundamental contradiction of his system, briefly and to the point.

He executes precisely the same *volte-face* in another passage dealing with the whole question of kinds of perfection. God is not to be blamed, he insists, because I am a man and not an angel or a god. "It is not fitting that all things should be equal. Has Reason then measured things out with the intention that they should not be equal? By no means. It was in accordance with nature that this should be so." Then follows an enumeration of the degrees of emanation, ending finally with the physical world whose parts "are not souls, but weakenings of souls already fading in the process of emanation. For the seminal reason of an animal, even though it be animate, is a different soul from that from which it proceeded. And this seminal reason becomes weaker as it hastens on into Matter.

ἀνάγκη δὲ ἔλλειψιν εἶναι ἐνταῦθα ἀγαθοῦ, ὅτι ἐν ἄλλῳ. τὸ οὖν ἄλλο, ἐν ᾧ ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἕτερον ἀγαθοῦ ὂν ποιεῖ τὴν ἔλλειψιν· τοῦτο γὰρ οὐκ ἀγαθὸν ἦν. διὸ οὐδὲ ἀπολέσθαι τὰ κακά, ὅτι τε ἄλλα ἄλλων ἐλάττω πρὸς ἀγαθοῦ φύσιν ἕτερά τε ἄλλα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς ὑποστάσεως ἐκεῖθεν λαβόντα, τοιαῦτα δὲ γενόμενα τῷ πόρρω.

And what it produces is still more feeble. See then how far the creature is removed from original perfection! And still it is wonderful! But because that which is created has a certain nature, what is prior to it need not have the same nature, for that which is prior to it is better than anything created, and without blemish. We should wonder rather that it has given something of itself to the world and has left such traces of itself. If it has given more of itself than created things could receive, it is still more to be approved. Hence, though we cast the blame upon created men the munificence of Providence is still the greater."[1]

We return now to the consideration earlier deferred of the Plotinian method of dealing with the objection that if the moral life be merely a play by which the inner essence of the soul is unaffected, all real distinction of moral values, such as good and

[1] iii. 3, § 3 (273) [vol. i. p. 253, l. 24 *et seq.*]. *οὐ γὰρ πάντα ἴσα ἔδει. ἆρ' οὖν μετρήσαντος αὐτοῦ προαιρέσει τοῦ μὴ δεῖν πάντα ἴσα; οὐδαμῶς· ἀλλ' οὕτω κατὰ φύσιν εἶχε γενέσθαι. ἀκόλουθος γὰρ οὗτος ὁ λόγος ψυχῇ ἄλλῃ, ἀκόλουθος δὲ ψυχὴ αὕτη νῷ, νοῦς δὲ οὐ τούτων τι ἕν, ἀλλὰ πάντα· τὰ δὲ πάντα πολλά· πολλὰ δὲ ὄντα καὶ οὐ ταὐτὰ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα, τὰ δὲ δεύτερα, τὰ δὲ ἐφεξῆς καὶ τῇ ἀξίᾳ ἔμελλεν εἶναι. καὶ τοίνυν καὶ τὰ γενόμενα ζῷα οὐ ψυχαὶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ ψυχῶν ἐλαττώσεις, οἷον ἐξιτήλων ἤδη προιόντων. ὁ γὰρ τοῦ ζῴου λόγος, κἂν ἔμψυχος ᾖ, ἑτέρα ψυχή, οὐκ ἐκείνη, ἀφ' ἧς ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ σύμπας οὗτος ἐλάττων δὴ γίνεται σπεύδων εἰς ὕλην καὶ τὸ γενόμενον ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐνδεέστερον. σκόπει δὴ ὅσον ἀφέστηκε τὸ γενόμενον καὶ ὅμως ἐστὶ θαῦμα. οὐ τοίνυν, εἰ τοιοῦτον τὸ γενόμενον, καὶ τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ τοιοῦτον· ἔστι γὰρ παντὸς κρεῖττον τοῦ γενομένου καὶ ἔξω αἰτίας καὶ μᾶλλον θαυμάσαι, ὅτι ἔδωκέ τι μεθ' αὑτὸ καὶ τὰ ἴχνη αὐτοῦ τοιαῦτα. εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ πλέον ἔδωκεν ἢ ὅσον ἔχουσι κτήσασθαι, ἔτι μᾶλλον ἀποδεκτέον· ὥστε κινδυνεύειν τὴν αἰτίαν ἐπὶ τοὺς γενομένους ἰέναι, τὸ δὲ τῆς προνοίας μειζόνως ἔχειν.*

evil, natural and unnatural, will be destroyed. In Plotinus's treatment of this point the idea of a limitation to the workings of Providence is further developed. The objection, he says, demands that we look more closely at the nature of the λόγος or seminal reason. "This is not unmixed Mind or absolute Mind, nor even pure Soul either. But it depends upon and is a sort of radiation from both Mind and Soul—from Soul that is, determined by Mind—which generate this seminal reason as a life having reason latent in it (ἡσυχῇ). But all life, even evil life, is activity. . . . Whatever has this activity present within it, and participates in it in any way, is at once rationalized, that is to say is given form, since the activity peculiar to life is capable of giving form, and its motion is formative. Its activity then is like that of an artist, like the motions of a dancer, for instance. The dancer himself is a good type of the artistic life, in as much as his art moves him and moves him to be what he is in life. . . . Since then this reason proceeds from the one Mind and the one life and from each in its fulness, it is neither one life nor one mind, nor either in its fulness, nor does it give itself to its objects in its entirety and completeness. But opposing one part to another and creating each part with something lacking, it in itself involves and produces war and conflict. Thus, as a whole it is one, though it is not Unity."[1]

Next, Plotinus adduces the dramatic analogy,

[1] iii. 2, § 16 (267 D–268) [vol. i. p. 245, l. 18 *et seq.*]. ἔστι τοίνυν οὗτος οὐκ ἄκρατος νοῦς οὐδ' αὐτονοῦς οὐδέ γε ψυχῆς καθαρᾶς τὸ γένος,

and likens the oneness of the universe to that of a drama, or of a musical chord, in a passage which we have already examined. This passage is then qualified in the following manner. "If good men form some parts of the world and evil men other parts, and the evil men form a greater part than the good, it is like a drama in which the author in part arranges scenes for the actors, and in part employs the actors themselves as he finds them. He does not himself create the protagonist, nor yet the second player nor the third, but gives to each his appropriate lines, and in doing so assigns to him the part which befits him. . . . Prior to the play the actors were what they were, and gave themselves to the play as they were."[1]

Finally, in another book in the first Ennead, to a consideration of which we shall shortly turn, the

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ἠρτημένος δὲ ἐκείνης καὶ οἷον ἔκλαμψις ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, νοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ ψυχῆς κατὰ νοῦν διακειμένης γεννησάντων τὸν λόγον τοῦτον ζωὴν λόγον τινὰ ἡσυχῇ ἔχουσαν. πᾶσα δὲ ζωὴ ἐνέργεια, καὶ ἡ φαύλη· ἐνέργεια δὲ οὐχ ὡς τὸ πῦρ ἐνεργεῖ, ἀλλ' ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτῆς, κἂν μὴ αἴσθησίς τις παρῇ, κίνησίς τις οὐκ εἰκῇ. οἷς γοῦν ἂν παρῇ καὶ μετάσχῃ ὁπωσοῦν ὁτιοῦν, εὐθὺς λελόγωται, τοῦτο δέ ἐστι μεμόρφωται, ὡς τῆς ἐνεργείας τῆς κατὰ τὴν ζωὴν μορφοῦν δυναμένης καὶ κινούσης οὕτως, ὡς μορφοῦν. ἡ τοίνυν ἐνέργεια αὐτῆς τεχνική, ὥσπερ ἂν ὁ ὀρχούμενος κινούμενος εἴη· ὁ γὰρ ὀρχηστὴς τῇ οὕτω τεχνικῇ ζωῇ ἔοικεν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ τέχνη αὐτὸν κινεῖ καὶ οὕτω κινεῖ, ὡς τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῆς τοιαύτης πως οὔσης. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν εἰρήσθω τοῦ οἵαν δεῖ καὶ τὴν ἡντινοῦν ζωὴν ἡγεῖσθαι ἕνεκα. ἦκων τοίνυν οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἐκ νοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ ζωῆς μιᾶς πλήρους ὄντος ἑκατέρου οὐκ ἔστιν οὔτε ζωὴ μία οὔτε νοῦς τις εἷς οὔτε ἐκτασταχοῦ πλήρης οὐδὲ διδοὺς ἑαυτὸν οἷς δίδωσιν ὅλον τε καὶ πάντα. ἀντιθεὶς δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὰ μέρη καὶ ποιήσας ἐνδεᾶ πολέμου καὶ μάχης σύστασιν καὶ γένεσιν εἰργάσατο καὶ οὕτως ἐστὶν εἷς πᾶς, εἰ μὴ ἓν εἴη.

[1] iii. 2, § 17 (268 G) [vol. i. p. 247, l. 24 *et seq.*]. *ἀλλ' εἰ τὸ μὲν μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀγαθὸς ἀνήρ, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο πονηρός, καὶ πλείω μέρη ὁ πονηρός, ὥσπερ ἐν δράμασι τὰ μὲν τάττει αὐτοῖς ὁ ποιητής, τοῖς δὲ*

interdependence of contraries is reviewed and explained with a fresh addition to its significance. Plotinus is interpreting Plato's saying in the *Theaetetus*, that Evil necessarily exists in the world and can never pass away. Plato has defined flight from Evil not as a literal flight from the world, but as a just and upright life led in the world. It is objected that if every one were good, then Evil would cease. Impossible, is the answer, Evil exists necessarily since there must be an opposite to the Good.

Plotinus raises objections. Vice is an opposite not of *the* Good, but of virtue which is *a* good—in that it helps us to overcome Matter. But to *the* Good which is without quality, there can be no opposite. How then can Evil be said to be *necessary* as an opposite to the Good? It is true that contraries exist, as for example sickness and health, but the existence of one is not indispensable to that of the other. Again, how can there be an opposite to essence and the super-essential? Let us answer by asking what such an essence would be. Evidently it would be the non-essential, and the non-good. If the particulars that are comprised under these two genera are all opposed, the genera themselves will be

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χρῆται οὖσιν ἤδη· οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸς πρωταγωνιστὴν οὐδὲ δεύτερον οὐδὲ τρίτον ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ διδοὺς ἑκάστῳ τοὺς προσήκοντας λόγους ἤδη ἀπέδωκεν ἑκάστῳ εἰς ὃ τετάχθαι δέον· οὕτω τοι καὶ ἔστι τόπος ἑκάστῳ ὁ μὲν τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ὁ δὲ τῷ κακῷ πρέπων. ἑκάτερος οὖν κατὰ φύσιν καὶ κατὰ λόγον εἰς ἑκάτερον καὶ τὸν πρέποντα χωρεῖ τὸν τόπον ἔχων, ὃν εἵλετο. εἶτα φθέγγεται καὶ ποιεῖ ὁ μὲν ἀσεβεῖς λόγους καὶ ἔργα (ποιῶν), ὁ δὲ τὰ ἐναντία· ἦσαν γὰρ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ δράματος τοιοῦτοι οἱ ὑποκριταὶ διδόντες ἑαυτοὺς τῷ δράματι.

opposed and even more opposed than the particulars. For opposed particulars fall within the same species, or the same genera, and have some common characteristics. How much more opposed will things like good and evil be, whose contrarieties can be reconciled in no *summum genus*! Rather do they represent ultimate and opposed genera. For to being and not-being, truth and falsehood, no logical common substratum can be found.

Good, then, may have an opposite of this kind. But does Evil exist necessarily? Yes, in the sense that there must be Matter in the universe. Without Matter the universe could not exist. The world is a mixture of *νοῦς* and *ἀνάγκη*. And the necessity for this contrary principle may be explained as follows: "Since the Good is not alone, through progression, or if one prefers, through continual descent and departure from it, there must necessarily arise a last thing, that is, something after which nothing more can be produced. This 'last' is Evil. It is necessary that there should be something after the first, hence comes this 'last.' This is Matter which has nothing left of the 'first' in it. It is in this sense that Evil is necessary." [1]

In the light of these passages new aspects of the

[1] For all this ending with the quotation, see i. 8, § 6 (75 G–77 E) [vol. i. p. 104, l. 29 *et seq.*]. *ἐπεὶ γὰρ οὐ μόνον τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀνάγκη τῇ ἐκβάσει τῇ παρ' αὐτοῦ, ἤ, εἰ οὕτω τις ἐθέλοι λέγειν, τῇ ἀεὶ ὑποβάσει καὶ ἀποστάσει, τὸ ἔσχατον, καὶ μεθ' ὃ οὐκ ἦν ἔτι γενέσθαι ὁτιοῦν, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ κακόν. ἐξ ἀνάγκης δὲ εἶναι τὸ μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον, ὥστε καὶ τὸ ἔσχατον· τοῦτο δὲ ἡ ὕλη μηδὲν ἔτι ἔχουσα αὐτοῦ. καὶ αὕτη ἡ ἀνάγκη τοῦ κακοῦ.*

Plotinian theodicy are opened up. From Stoic monism we seem to be passing over to the conventional Neo-Platonic dualism. Evil now appears not as a positive factor absolutely contributive to the nature of perfection, but as a principle by which the realization of perfection in and by the universe is curtailed. It not only differentiates kinds of perfection and arranges them in a hierarchy (remark the old confusion once more), but it prevents any particular sort of excellence from being completely exemplified. It is the opposite of the Good, and contrary to it beyond any hope of synthesis with it in a higher unity. The two can find no common universal, no genus broad enough to include them both.

Seen under these new conditions the world is still the best possible world, but in a different sense. It is the best possible world not absolutely, but relatively—the best, that is, which the power of the Good can produce in the face of the limitations under which it works. Our admiration of the world must not be cooled by the presence of Evil nor our faith in Providence shaken. Rather must we admire creation and Creator alike for having done so well under the circumstances.

Dualism has got a bad name among us. Philosophically it controverts ethical, and (owing to a confusion of the senses of the term perfection) is supposed to controvert naturalistic, monism. Theologically it denies the omnipotence of God. Yet

it is, after all, the assumption by which every man lives, and in which many religious souls find their inspiration, if only they could see the logical implications of their devotional attitude. This fact is forced upon us in every exhortation of the preacher and reformer. The world can be bettered, must be bettered. Conditions as they are are not ideal. So cries the moralist, and on this faith the moral man lives. Or, expressed in theistic terms, it is in a sense of co-operation with a higher power toward a common end that the moral life receives its consecration and customary piety its call and support. But one cannot co-operate with omnipotence or aid in establishing a perfection already promulgated by fiat. It would be only a labouring God working against real obstacles towards an end as yet unattained whom our acts and lives could help, or by whom, in any intelligible sense of the word, we could be helped.

We act then towards God and with God as if his power were restricted, and we could be of some use to him in helping bring in his kingdom, whatever the letter of our creed may imply to the contrary, and however alert we may be in defending it from attack. That alertness indeed is not without its justification. The religious consciousness needs and assumes in its God *power enough* to carry the evolution of reality through to a happy consummation. Belief in God rests ultimately on the need of vindicating the assertion and pursuit of the Ideal

in the face of discouraging conditions and of assuring its ultimate success. For the efficient discharge of this function we must believe his power to be sufficient, and to postulate his omnipotence is to express this belief by a hyperbole. But the assertion overreaches itself and defeats its own end. To say that God is almighty is merely a grandiloquent way of saying that the universe is acceptable to itself as it stands. And that assertion, as we have seen, is to attribute to God a perfection in which we take no interest, and to which we can only conform by a repression of natural aspirations and a renunciation of legitimate goods. It is, in fine, to destroy the whole function of God as a warrant and support of the moral life.

So much, in passing, for dualism. Whatever the merits of the question may be, its appearance as part of the Plotinian theodicy leads us to reopen the entire question *περὶ τοῦ τίνα καὶ πόθεν τὰ κακά*, and to ask ourselves again, as Plotinus asks himself in the eighth book of the first Ennead, what and whence is Evil? To do so is to begin a new chapter in our study.

CHAPTER IV

MATTER AS THE PRINCIPLE OF EVIL

To the opening paragraphs of the eighth book of the first Ennead we have already had occasion to refer. We remember how they start with the question of what the nature of Evil may be, and, to facilitate an answer, turn to the consideration of the nature of its opposite, the Good. In the case of this discussion, Evil is excluded from the spheres of *νοῦς* and *ψυχή*; it is banished, as in Plato, from the whole realm of Being.[1]

Evil, then, if it is evil, must be sought in the realm of Not-being, "as some form of Not-being, and as having to do with things that are mingled with Not-being, or in some way sharing in it."[2] Plotinus, however, hastens to define his meaning more sharply.

Evil is Not-being, but not in the absolute sense of the word. Its not-being does not mean that it

[1] i. 8, § 1 (72 A–73 C) [vol. i. p. 99, l. 6 *et seq.*].

[2] i. 8, § 3 (73 C) [vol. i. p. 101, l. 7 *et seq.*] *λείπεται τοίνυν, εἴπερ ἔστιν, ἐν τοῖς μὴ οὖσιν εἶναι οἷον εἶδός τι τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ὂν καὶ περί τι τῶν μεμιγμένων τῷ μὴ ὄντι ἢ ὁπωσοῦν κοινωνούντων τῷ μὴ ὄντι.*

does not exist, but that its existence is other than that of pure Being. At first sight this would seem merely a complex way of stating that evil is other than good. This in a sense is true, but the statement is the outcome of much philosophic discussion. Plotinus is seeing one of the ghosts by which ancient philosophy was haunted, the question of the existence of Not-being. Its outlines had been vaguely descried by the Eleatics. It had taken more definite shape in the Atomists' assertion of the existence of the Void. It had been raised by Plato in the *Sophist*, and it may be fairly said to have appeared to Aristotle, who attempted to exorcize it with the πρωτὴ ὕλη. And it proved a useful spectre to invoke in behalf of Neo-Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic dualism.

The Plotinian qualification bears some resemblance to Plato's answer to the question as given in the *Sophist*.[1] There the existence of Not-being is shown to mean the existence of not-being-this, or not-being-that. The not-beautiful is, but it is not beautiful. Μὴ ὄν becomes ἕτερον, the principle of differentiation between various classes of things, all of which, though they exclude one another, participate equally in Being.

This, however, is not altogether Plotinus's thought, so far as Evil is concerned. Evil exists, indeed, and its Not-being is to be explained as "not-being" relatively to the Good. But this "not-being" is

[1] *Sophist*, 237–59.

more than a mere logical negative. It has a metaphysical significance as well. For the Good is the source and entirety of Being. Not to be the Good, then, means not to be Being. And in proportion as a thing is removed from the Good, in that proportion it lacks Being. Everything, so far as it is, is good. Evil, one might say paradoxically, as far as it is, is good. The paradox would be explained by Plotinus by the statement that the fact of the existence of Evil is conditioned by the source of all existence, but its value is due to the degree to which the Good, diminished and spent, has died away in the evil part. We are not, to be sure, really rid of the paradox, but to that we shall return later.

It is perhaps to emphasize this difference, and apparently with the examples given by Plato in the *Sophist* of rest and motion, that Plotinus goes on to say that Evil is not "Not-being" in the sense in which rest and motion are Not-being. Motion, Plotinus had elsewhere defined as transition from potentiality to actuality, and had designated its existence as accidental.[1] But Evil, as we shall see, cannot be described as merely a property or accident; nor could it be regarded as potential Being or as incidental to the passage from potentiality to actuality. That would have been to reverse the whole process of emanation. Evil is due to a distinction in values, founded not upon a progress from

[1] vi. 22, § 3 (638 A) [vol. ii. p. 354, l. 17 *et seq.*]. Cf. ii. 6 (129 A-B) [vol. i. p. 172, l. 4 *et seq.*].

lower to higher, but upon a degeneration of the higher into the lower.

This thought stands out in sharp contrast to that of Aristotle. In both systems, indeed, the relatively actual and higher is prior logically and metaphysically to the relatively lower and potential. But the direction of the world-process in one system is opposed to that of the other. For Aristotle it is essentially an ascent, a progression, a realization by Matter of higher and higher forms and more and more actuality. Plotinus, to be sure, keeps the "upward-way" in his doctrine of the return of ψυχή to the One; but this upward way is inner and mystic; a process of salvation in which the process of creation is revoked. Creation is not aspiration towards the One, but emanation from it, in which Being and actuality undergo a regressive diminution.

To return now to the text. Evil must be regarded as an image of Being, or rather of Not-being. This image we find present in the sensible world and its properties, or in something essential or accidental to it and them. We may picture it as a sort of Alpha-privative of form, determination, and self-sufficiency. This character of want and insufficiency is not an attribute of the evil principle, but is its essence and being. Nor is Evil merely a property or attribute. It also exists in and for itself, like the Good. Just as we may distinguish two kinds of good, the Good καθ' αὑτό, and the goodness of things which participate in the Good,

so we may discriminate between what we may call adjectival and substantival Evil, evil as a quality and attribute of objects, and Evil as a principle or substance by which the property is imparted. Substantival and adjectival Evil are also termed respectively *πρῶτον κακόν* or primal, and *δεύτερον κακόν* or secondary Evil.[1]

"That which underlies structures and forms and shapes and measures and bounds, and is embellished with order not its own, which has nothing good of itself, and is, as it were, a shadowy image in comparison with real existence, and is the essence of evil (if there can be an essence of evil)—such might reasoning find to be primal and absolute Evil." Bodies are evil secondarily, not absolutely. Evil inheres in them as the result of their participation in Matter. Hence their nature is such that it has no true form, is bereft of life, full of internal strife, disordered in its own motion, a hindrance to the soul and the soul's activities, and in constant Heracleitean flux.[2] Evil, then, we might say, is an essential property of the corporeal.

"Of *ψυχή*, however, Evil is but an accidental property. The soul is not evil in herself, nor are all souls evil. By reason, however, of her union with the body, and of the vegetative and sensitive power involved therein, she is liable to the solicitations of the senses and passions, and by giving way

[1] i. 8, § 3 (73 E–74 B) [vol. i. p. 101, l. 13 *et seq.*].
[2] i. 8, § 3 (74 A) [vol. i. p. 102, l. 10 *et seq.*].

to these becomes soiled and corrupted by the evil principle. As long, however, as she does not heed these solicitations, she remains innocent and undefiled.[1] The perfected and intellectually inclined soul is ever pure, and removed from Matter and all indeterminateness and lack of measure and Evil; nor does she see or come near them. She remains pure, determined wholly by Mind. But if she does not remain thus, and goes out from herself, then by reason of not being determined by the perfect and the primal, she becomes, in proportion as she lacks them, the shadow of her perfect self. She is filled with indeterminateness and sees darkness, and already has hold of Matter, seeing, as it were, what she does not see, just as we also speak of seeing darkness."[2]

The point is further developed. We are not the principles of Evil. We do not produce it. It is prior to us. "The evil which lays hold of men lays hold of them without their willing it. Indeed, there is a flight from evils existing in the soul, open for those who are able to flee. Not all, however, are able."[3] It follows that vice is not absolute Evil, nor even an essential property of the soul, since it is not present in all men, and where it is present, can be overcome and driven out.

We may object, however, that external and

[1] i. 8, § 4 (74) [vol. i. p. 102, l. 18 *et seq.*].
[2] i. 8, § 4 (74. 9) [vol. i. p. 103, l. 12 *et seq.*].
[3] i. 8, § 5 (75 E) [vol. i. p. 104, l. 21 *et seq.*].

physical evils, such as disease and poverty, seem incapable of being comprehended within the definition. But, answers Plotinus, sickness may be described as deficiency or superfluity, and hence as a lack of order and determination in the body, ugliness is a lack of determination of Matter by Form, poverty is a lack of the necessities of corporeal life.[1] The negative definition of Evil covers them.

Metaphorically, then, we may define Evil in relation to the soul as "seeing darkness." This, which metaphysically speaking is only secondary, is psychologically primal Evil, and the darkness itself, which in the order of the universe is primal is, relative to the contaminated essence of the soul, only secondary.[2]

[1] i. 8, § 5 (75 D) [vol. i. p. 104, l. 14 *et seq.*].

[2] i. 8, § 85 (15 B) [vol. i. p. 103, l. 22 *et seq.*]. The foregoing quotations and discussions are taken from the passage appended. *δεῖ οὖν εἶναί τι καὶ ἄπειρον καθ' αὑτὸ καὶ ἀνείδεον αὖ αὐτὸ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ πρόσθεν, ἃ τὴν τοῦ κακοῦ ἐχαρακτήριζε φύσιν, καὶ εἴ τι μετ' ἐκεῖνο τοιοῦτον, ἢ μεμιγμένον ἔχει τοῦτο ἢ βλέπον πρὸς αὐτό ἐστι τοιοῦτον ἢ ποιητικόν ἐστι τοιούτου. τὴν δὴ ὑποκειμένην σχήμασι καὶ εἴδεσι καὶ μορφαῖς καὶ μέτροις καὶ πέρασι καὶ ἀλλοτρίῳ κόσμῳ κοσμουμένην, μηδὲν παρ' αὑτῆς ἀγαθὸν ἔχουσαν, εἴδωλον δὲ ὡς πρὸς τὰ ὄντα, κακοῦ δὲ οὐσίαν, εἴ τις καὶ δύναται κακοῦ οὐσία εἶναι, ταύτην ἀνευρίσκει ὁ λόγος κακὸν εἶναι πρῶτον καὶ καθ' αὑτὸ κακόν. 4. σωμάτων δὴ φύσις, καθόσον μετέχει ὕλης, κακὸν ἂν εἴη· ἔχει μὲν γὰρ εἰδός τι οὐκ ἀληθινὸν ἑστέρηταί τε ζωῆς φθείρει τε ἄλληλα φορᾷ τῇ παρ' αὐτῶν ἀτάκτῳ ἐμπόδιά τε ψυχῆς πρὸς τὴν αὐτῆς ἐνέργειαν φεύγει τε οὐσίαν ἀεὶ ῥέοντα, ψυχὴ δὲ καθ' ἑαυτὴν μὲν οὐ κακὴ οὐδ' αὖ πᾶσα κακή. ἀλλὰ τίς ἡ κακή; οἷόν, φησι, δουλωσαμένη μὲν ᾧ πέφυκε κακία ψυχῆς ἐγγίνεσθαι, ὡς τοῦ ἀλόγου τῆς ψυχῆς εἴδους τὸ κακὸν δεχομένου, ἀμετρίαν καὶ ὑπερβολὴν καὶ ἔλλειψιν, ἐξ ὧν καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ δειλία καὶ ἡ ἄλλη ψυχῆς κακία, ἀκούσια παθήματα, δόξας ψευδεῖς ἐμποιοῦντα κακά τε νομίζειν καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἃ φεύγει τε καὶ διώκει. ἀλλὰ τί τὸ πεποιηκὸς τὴν κακίαν ταύτην καὶ πῶς εἰς ἀρχὴν ἐκείνην καὶ αἰτίαν ἀνάξεις; ἢ πρῶτον μὲν οὐκ ἔξω ὕλης οὐδὲ καθ' αὑτὴν*

The theory as thus outlined runs counter in all its implications to that doctrine of the possibility of varieties of perfection upon which Plotinus so strongly insists. Kinds of perfection have to become grades of imperfection, progressively increasing as the light of Being dies through shade after shade of obscurity into the absolute darkness. They can be viewed in no other way. Whether or no Plotinus is conscious of his contradiction of himself, he will not allow it to exist. He warns us, in fact, against the logical conclusion of what he has said. Evil does not consist in deficiency of any sort whatever, but in universal deficiency; deficiency in all respects (*ἐλλείψει ἐν τῇ παντελεῖ*). "For," he explains, "what is slightly deficient in the Good is not evil, since it can also be perfect relatively to its own nature. But whenever a thing is altogether deficient, as Matter is, such deficiency is essential Evil, and has

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ἡ ψυχὴ ἡ τοιαύτη. μέμικται οὖν ἀμετρίᾳ καὶ ἄμοιρος εἴδους τοῦ κοσμοῦντος καὶ εἰς μέτρον ἄγοντος· σώματι γὰρ ἐγκέκραται ὕλην ἔχοντι. ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τὸ λογιζόμενον εἰ βλάπτοιτο, ὁρᾶν κωλύεται καὶ τοῖς πάθεσι καὶ τῷ ἐπισκοτεῖσθαι τῇ ὕλῃ καὶ πρὸς ὕλην νενευκέναι καὶ ὅλως οὐ πρὸς οὐσίαν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς γένεσιν ὁρᾶν, ἧς ἀρχὴ ἡ ὕλης φύσις οὕτως οὖσα κακὴ ὡς καὶ τὸ μήπω ἐν αὐτῇ, μόνον δὲ βλέψαν εἰς αὐτήν, ἀναπιμπλάναι κακοῦ ἑαυτῆς. ἄμοιρος γὰρ παντελῶς οὖσα ἀγαθοῦ καὶ στέρησις τούτου καὶ ἄκρατος ἔλλειψις ἐξομοιοῖ ἑαυτῇ πᾶν ὅ τι ἂν αὐτῆς προσάψηται ὀπωσοῦν. ἡ μὲν οὖν τελεία καὶ πρὸς νοῦν νεύουσα ψυχὴ ἀεὶ καθαρὰ καὶ ὕλην ἀπέστραπται καὶ τὸ ἀόριστον ἅπαν καὶ τὸ ἄμετρον καὶ κακὸν οὔτε ὁρᾷ οὔτε πελάζει· καθαρὰ οὖν μένει ὁρισθεῖσα τῷ παντελῶς. ἡ δὲ μὴ μείνασα τοῦτο, ἀλλ' ἐξ αὐτῆς προελθοῦσα τῷ μὴ τελείῳ μηδὲ πρώτῳ οἷον ἴνδαλμα ἐκείνης τῷ ἐλλείμματι καθόσον ἐνέλιπεν ἀοριστίας πληρωθεῖσα σκότος ὁρᾷ καὶ ἔχει ἤδη ὕλην βλέπουσα εἰς ὃ μὴ βλέπει, ὡς λεγόμεθα ὁρᾶν καὶ τὸ σκότος.

no share in the Good."[1] It may be that Plotinus means to include in general deficiency, the deficiency of a thing not only as compared with other kinds of things, but with respect to its proper perfection as well. Or it may be that we have here another attempt to reconcile kinds with grades of perfection by insisting that there is a point in deficiency at which it becomes evil; namely, when a thing is wanting "not only in the nature of something else, but in its own nature as well."

There follows upon the passages we have been examining the discussion already noted of Plato's assertion in the *Theaetetus* of the necessity of Evil as a contrary to the Good. Then Plotinus summarizes the argument, so far as it has gone, as follows:— "That which is in essence unmeasured is primal Evil; that which becomes unmeasured, whether through similarity or participation, is, by virtue of what has befallen it, secondary Evil. Thus darkness is primary, and that which is darkened is secondary Evil. Vice, being ignorance and lack of measure with respect to the soul, is secondary Evil, and not absolute Evil; just as virtue is not the primal Good,

[1] i. 8, § 5 (75 B) [vol. i. p. 103, l. 26 *et seq.*]. 5. ἀλλ' εἰ ἡ ἔλλειψις τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ αἰτία τοῦ ὁρᾶν καὶ συνεῖναι τῷ σκότει, τὸ κακὸν εἴη ἂν ἐν τῇ ἐλλείψει τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ πρῶτον—δεύτερον δὲ ἔσται τὸ σκότος—καὶ ἡ φύσις τοῦ κακοῦ οὐκέτι ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸ τῆς ὕλης. ἢ οὐκ ἐν τῇ ὑπωσοῦν ἐλλείψει, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ παντελεῖ τὸ κακόν· τὸ γοῦν ἐλλεῖπον ὀλίγον τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ οὐ κακόν, δύναται γὰρ καὶ τέλειον εἶναι ὡς πρὸς φύσιν τὴν αὑτοῦ. ἀλλ' ὅταν παντελῶς ἐλλείπῃ, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ ὕλη, τοῦτο τὸ ὄντως κακὸν μηδεμίαν ἔχον ἀγαθοῦ μοῖραν.

but good because it resembles and participates in the primal Good."[1]

The rest of the book is devoted to a rebuttal of various possible objections. In the first place, it may be said that vice is not due to Matter, but to a disposition of the body or modification of Matter like heat or cold or bitterness or emptiness or fulness; in a word, to a form of some sort. But even supposing this hypothesis to be true, the cause of the evil disposition is still to be found in Matter. A form or quality imposed upon Matter and working upon it cannot produce without it what it produces in connection with it. Thus the form of an axe can be nothing without iron. Again, the form united with Matter is not what it would be by itself. By its union with Matter it is corrupted, and filled with a nature contrary to itself and to the Good, and is dominated and altered by it. Evil, then, is not a modification of Matter by Form, but a modification of Form by Matter. It may lie in a disposition of the body, but the disposition is evil only in so far as it represents a partial disintegration of form and measure into formlessness and lack of measure, due to the material admixture.

Apply this directly to the problem of sin and it means that Matter is the cause of evil-doing. It is

[1] i. 8, § 8 (78 B) [vol. i. p. 109, l. 3 *et seq.*]. *ἔστω δὴ πρώτως μὲν τὸ ἄμετρον κακόν, τὸ δ' ἐν ἀμετρίᾳ γενόμενον ἢ ὁμοιώσει ἢ μεταλήψει τῷ συμβεβηκέναι αὐτῷ δευτέρως κακόν· καὶ πρώτως μὲν τὸ σκότος, τὸ δὲ ἐσκοτισμένον δευτέρως ὡσαύτως. κακία δὴ ἄγνοια οὖσα καὶ ἀμετρία περὶ ψυχὴν δευτέρως κακὸν καὶ οὐκ αὐτοκακόν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀρετὴ πρῶτον ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' ὅτι ὡμοίωται ἢ μετείληφεν αὐτοῦ.*

useless to argue that one should overcome Matter. The spirit that is tainted by Matter cannot overcome. Our disposition, as we know, is affected by bodily changes and states. The only thing to do is to flee the bodily and material altogether. Thus only can we overcome Evil.

The objection here treated is discussed in its more metaphysical aspects in the book on Matter. There it appears as denial of the possibility that the substratum of things may stand for a common quality in all the material elements. Plotinus asks four questions in reply: First, what is this quality? How shall we describe or define it? Second, how can a quality be a substratum, or, in other words, how can an adjective be a substantive? Third, how can quality, which has no matter or extension, be perceived in what will also have no extension? Finally, how can this quality, if it be describable, be called Matter?

On the other hand, if, like the substratum of definitions, it cannot be defined, it will not be a quality, but the Matter of which we are in search.

Secondly, the important point arises how Matter or Evil can be an object of knowledge. Virtue we know quite properly through the instrumentality of the intellect, since the highest faculties of the mind have in virtue an object akin to and at one with themselves. In recognizing the Good in the world, reason is but finding itself. But how can the intellect whose thought is Being, think or know

what is relatively "Not-being"—and know it precisely in its deficient character.

The possibility of such knowledge with respect to adjectival Evil is first discussed. The conclusion is that we know the badness of a thing as a departure from a standard set by what we consider the proper form and entelechy of the thing in question. The object offers enough that is positive, enough traces of form for us to infer what Idea is seeking expression there, and hence for us to be aware that this Idea is but imperfectly embodied. "We see in part only, but we infer the nature of what is absent from what is present. That is, the absent is really present formally or ideally, though it fails to appear in the particular instance of the form. In the same way, we succeed in making vice an object of discourse, leaving at the same time its deficiency in the sphere of the indeterminate and undefined. For example, if we see Matter wearing, as it were, an ugly mask because Reason has not sufficiently mastered it to hide its ugliness, we represent Matter to ourselves as ugly through its lack of form."[1]

Here, however, our knowledge of the indeterminate rests upon a co-ordinate knowledge of the determinate. We know the partial lack of form through its partial presence which gives thought a *point d'appui*. But how are we to know what is absolutely without form and incapable of determination *qua* itself, if knowledge means determination?

[1] i. 8, § 9 (78 c) [vol. i. p. 109, l. 19 *et seq.*].

So far as we know Matter, it is no longer Matter that we know. It is Matter determined and defined by our thought, by some form, and subsumed by it under some concept.

This difficulty had been met by Aristotle with the assertion that Matter in itself is unknowable.[1] Form alone is a possible object of discourse.[2] Plotinus, however, is under the spell of Plato's *νόθος λογισμός*, or "spurious concept."[3] To illustrate what he means, Plotinus takes refuge in an analogy. We know Evil and Matter, as we see darkness which is absence of light, the only medium of seeing. Νοῦς becomes another *νοῦς*, a sort of unreason, giving up its own nature in order to see what is opposite to that nature.[4]

[1] Aristotle, *Met.* Z 10, 1036 a 8.

[2] *Id.*, *ib.* Z 10, 1035 a 1-9.

[3] Plato, *Timaeus* 52 A-B.

[4] i. 8, § 9 (79 A) [vol. i. p. 109, l. 25 *et seq.*]. This discussion with the quotation on the previous page is based on the text appended. *τίνι οὖν ἐγνωρίσαμεν ταῦτα; καὶ πρῶτον κακίαν τίνι; ἀρετὴν μὲν γὰρ νῷ αὐτῷ καὶ φρονήσει· αὐτὴν γὰρ γνωρίζει· κακίαν δὲ πῶς; ἢ ὥσπερ κανόνι τὸ ὀρθὸν καὶ μή, οὕτω καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐναρμόζον τῇ ἀρετῇ; βλέποντες οὖν αὐτὸ ἢ μὴ βλέποντες, τὴν κακίαν λέγω; ἢ τὴν μὲν παντελῆ κακίαν οὐ βλέποντες, καὶ γὰρ ἄπειρον· ἀφαιρέσει οὖν τὸ μηδαμοῦ τοῦτο· τὴν δὲ μὴ παντελῆ τῷ ἐλλείπειν τούτῳ. μέρος οὖν ὁρῶντες τῷ παρόντι μέρει τὸ ἀπὸν λαμβάνοντες, ὅ ἐστι μὲν ἐν τῷ ὅλῳ εἴδει, ἐκεῖ δὲ ἄπεστιν, οὕτω κακίαν λέγομεν ἐν ἀορίστῳ τὸ ἐστερημένον καταλιπόντες. καὶ δὴ ἐπὶ τῆς ὕλης οἷον αἰσχρόν τι πρόσωπον ἰδόντες οὐ κρατήσαντος ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ λόγου, ὥστε κρύψαι τὸ τῆς ὕλης αἶσχος, αἰσχρὸν φανταζόμεθα τῇ τοῦ εἴδους ἐλλείψει. ὃ δὲ μηδαμῇ εἴδους τετύχηκε, πῶς; ἢ τὸ παράπαν ἀφαιροῦντες πᾶν εἶδος, ᾧ μὴ τοῦτο πάρεστι, λέγομεν εἶναι ὕλην, ἀμορφίαν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν λαβόντες ἐν τῷ πᾶν εἶδος ἀφελεῖν, εἰ μέλλομεν ὕλην θεάσασθαι. διὸ καὶ νοῦς ἄλλος οὗτος, οὐ νοῦς, τολμήσας ἰδεῖν τὰ μὴ αὐτοῦ.*

In another passage in the book on Matter, he seeks to explain his meaning. How will you conceive of that which is without quality? he demands. What will our thought or rational impression of it be like? It will be indeterminateness, is the reply. "For if like is known by like, then the indeterminate will be known by the indeterminate. There might indeed be a definite concept of the indeterminate, but the impression or intuition of the indeterminate would be indeterminate." That is, I can define a concept by saying that it is the concept of the indefinable. Such a concept cannot properly be called knowledge, since it says nothing of its object save that it is unknowable. Nor can it properly be called ignorance, since it is, as it were, conscious of its ignorance. That I cannot define is itself a definition. That I cannot know is itself an act of knowledge. Plotinus is insistent that the intuition of indeterminateness is not blank ignorance or absence of impression. It is, he says, reverting to the analogy of "seeing darkness," as positive an impression as that which the absence of light makes upon the eye. We are aware of blackness which we define as absence of colour, light, and form.

To think, then, of "Not-being" is indeed to think of nothing. But to think of nothing is not to cease to think. The thought of nothing is the result of abstracting all form and determinateness from an object and dwelling upon the formlessness which is left after one has thought away every mark

and attribute. Such thought Plotinus can describe only in the words of Plato as a bastard concept or presentation, not knowledge, but composed of the "Other" and the false.

At the same time, it is difficult for the soul to maintain this impression of indeterminateness. By her very definition of it as indefinable, she gives it, as we have seen, a spurious determinateness. Her essential operation is formative. As soon as she touches Matter, she gives it structure and determination; she thinks it under the form of material objects. "She is pained by the indeterminate as by a fear of being outside reality, and cannot bear to remain long in Not-being." [1]

[1] ii. 4, § 10 (164 D) [vol. i. p. 158, l. 7, p. 159, l. 11]. *τί οὖν νοήσω ἀμέγεθες ἐν ὕλῃ; τί δὲ νοήσεις ἄποιον ὁπωσοῦν; καὶ τίς ἡ νόησις καὶ τῆς διανοίας ἡ ἐπιβολή; ἢ ἀοριστία· εἰ γὰρ τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον, καὶ τῷ ἀορίστῳ τὸ ἀόριστον. λόγος μὲν οὖν γένοιτο ἂν περὶ τοῦ ἀορίστου ὡρισμένος, ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐπιβολὴ ἀόριστος. εἰ δ' ἕκαστον λόγῳ καὶ νοήσει γινώσκεται—ἐνταῦθα δὲ ὁ μὲν λόγος λέγει, ἃ δὴ λέγει περὶ αὐτῆς, ἡ δὲ βουλομένη εἶναι νόησις οὐ νόησις, ἀλλ' οἷον ἄνοια μᾶλλον—νόθον ἂν εἴη τὸ φάντασμα αὐτῆς καὶ οὐ γνήσιον, ἐκ θατέρου οὐκ ἀληθοῦς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ θατέρου λόγου συγκείμενον. καὶ τάχα εἰς τοῦτο βλέπων ὁ Πλάτων νόθῳ λογισμῷ εἶπε ληπτὴν εἶναι. τίς οὖν ἡ ἀοριστία τῆς ψυχῆς; ἆρα παντελὴς ἄγνοια ὡς ἀπουσία; ἢ ἐν καταφάσει τινὶ τὸ ἀόριστον, καὶ οἷον ὀφθαλμῷ τὸ σκότος ὕλη ὂν παντὸς ἀοράτου χρώματος, οὕτως οὖν καὶ ψυχὴ ἀφελοῦσα ὅσα ἐπὶ τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς οἷον φῶς τὸ λοιπὸν οὐκέτι ἔχουσα ὁρίσαι ὁμοιοῦται τῇ ὄψει τῇ ἐν σκότῳ ταὐτόν πως γινομένῃ τότε τῷ ὃ οἷον ὁρᾷ. ἆρ' οὖν ὁρᾷ; ἢ οὕτως ὡς ἀσχημοσύνην καὶ ὡς ἄχροιαν καὶ ὡς ἀλαμπὲς καὶ προσέτι δὲ ὡς οὐκ ἔχον μέγεθος· εἰ δὲ μή, εἰδοποιήσει ἤδη. ὅταν οὖν μηδὲν νοῇ, οὐ ταὐτὸ τοῦτο περὶ ψυχὴν πάθος; ἢ οὔ, ἀλλ' ὅταν μὲν μηδὲν [νοῇ], λέγει μηδέν, μᾶλλον δὲ πάσχει οὐδέν· ὅταν δὲ τὴν ὕλην, οὕτω πάσχει πάθος οἷον τύπον τοῦ ἀμόρφου· ἐπεὶ καὶ ὅταν τὰ μεμορφωμένα καὶ τὰ μεμεγεθυσμένα νοῇ, ὡς σύνθετα νοεῖ· ὡς γὰρ κεχρωσμένα καὶ ὅλως πεποιωμένα. τὸ ὅλον οὖν νοεῖ καὶ τὸ συνάμφω· καὶ ἐναργὴς μὲν ἡ νόησις ἢ ἡ αἴσθησις τῶν ἐπόντων, ἀμυδρὰ δὲ ἡ τοῦ*

So much for the difficulties connected with the possibility of conceiving the indeterminate. Another travels hard on their heels. How can that which is without determination or quality be called evil? This difficulty goes back to Aristotle. It is not perhaps fair to say that he shirked it, but we do him little injustice if we say that it was ignored by him. Certainly it never received any adequate treatment at his hands. And not only is it implicit throughout his doctrine of *πρωτὴ ὕλη*, but he involves himself in it almost deliberately, as it would seem, in a very interesting passage in the *Metaphysics*. "That the actuality," it runs, "is better and of more value than the potentiality which strives after it, is clear from what has been said. For in the case of things said to be potential, the same thing is capable of opposite determination. For example, what is called the potentiality of being well, is at the same time the same as the potentiality of being ill. To be well and to be ill have the same potentiality; similarly to be at rest and to be in motion, and to build and to demolish a house; and in the case of the house to be built and to be demolished. The potentiality of opposite determinations, then,

ὑποκειμένου, τοῦ ἀμόρφου· οὐ γὰρ εἶδος. ὃ οὖν ἐν τῷ ὅλῳ καὶ συνθέτῳ λαμβάνει μετὰ τῶν ἐπόντων ἀναλύσασα ἐκεῖνα καὶ χωρίσασα, ὃ καταλείπει ὁ λόγος, τοῦτο νοεῖ ἀμυδρῶς ἀμυδρὸν καὶ σκοτεινῶς σκοτεινὸν καὶ νοεῖ οὐ νοοῦσα. καὶ ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἔμεινεν οὐδ' αὐτὴ ἡ ὕλη ἄμορφος, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς πράγμασίν ἐστι μεμορφωμένη, καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ εὐθέως ἐπέβαλε τὸ εἶδος τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτῇ ἀλγοῦσα τῷ ἀορίστῳ, οἷον φόβῳ τοῦ ἔξω τῶν ὄντων εἶναι καὶ οὐκ ἀνεχομένη ἐν τῷ μὴ ὄντι ἐπιπολύ ἑστάναι.

can exist at the same time, but the opposites cannot exist at the same time. Nor can the actualities exist together, as, for example, to be well and to be ill. Hence, one of these must needs be the Good, but the potentiality is equally the capacity of both or neither. The actuality then is better. But it also follows that in the case of Evil, the completed fact and actuality would be worse than the potentiality. For the potentiality is one and the same capacity for both opposites. Clearly, then, there is no Evil except evil facts. For Evil is subsequent in nature to potentiality. Nor would there be in things primal and eternal, either any evil thing or error, or anything corruptible, for corruption also pertains to evil things."[1]

Of the sense of this, there can be no question. Good and Evil are alike phenomenal, the substratum of the ἐναντίωσις is neither. But if Matter be absolutely passive and indifferent, then not only does it fail to explain the fact of Evil at all, but it renders the fact an inexplicable surd. For since Form is the source of energy and direction in the Aristotelian system, and since energy and direction are always for the Good, Matter must be affected only by that energy and directed only toward the entelechy, and hence must completely embody the end in question. Allowing such a thing as a bare possibility of opposite determinations, that possibility could never be more than bare, and could

[1] Aristotle, *Met.* Θ 9, 1051 a 4-21.

never vitiate, as in fact it does vitiate, the potentiality of the Good. Allowing that Matter *could* go wrong, it *would* not, so entirely would it be, according to its logical concept, submitted to the attraction of the End and the Good.

Two considerations, however, will help us in dealing with this difficulty. In the first place, we must remember that this mutability and indifference of Matter is applicable only in the last resort to the πρωτὴ ὕλη. But πρωτὴ ὕλη is little more than a hypothesis attenuated to the extreme of abstraction, and saved from being pure Not-being only by its possibility of becoming something. Matter, in so far as we can predicate anything about it, is to some extent determinate. We are quite as justified in saying οὐκ ἔστι ὕλη, as οὐκ ἔστι κακὸν παρὰ τὰ πράγματα. In so far as it is predicable and determinate, that determination is *qua* Matter always evil. In any object, what we mean by its Matter beyond the fact of its individual and corporeal existence is the imperfect character of that existence. In so far, then, as Matter stands for a value as well as a fact, that value is always evil. To all intents and purposes, that is, it is in itself evil.

This, however, is to postpone, not to settle the difficulty. The crux of the question is how Matter, being pure passivity and absolute acquiescence, could do other than always and completely embody the perfect Form. The answer could only be that the passivity is not really pure, nor the acquiescence

absolute. In short, there is a self-contradiction here in the Aristotelian system. Logically, perhaps, Matter could be reduced to pure potentiality; as a matter of fact it could not. In its logical form it would not work. Hence, while Aristotle talks of Matter as indeterminate potentiality, he uses it even in its most indefinite and primal sense as something definitely characterized. The opposition of its determinations could not be otherwise derived from it. Out of the absolutely indeterminate, given even the determining form, at the most one determination, to and by the form, could arise and even the possibility of deriving that one is doubtful.

The result is that even to the Aristotelian πρωτὴ ὕλη a positive character must be implicitly attributed. If final causation is to work, it seems as if something more than mere acquiescence must be ascribed to Matter. Upon an absolutely neutral medium, the perfect might exert its charm in vain. We are forced to posit in Matter a susceptibility which is more than a capacity, and amounts to an inherent affection for the Ideal. It must have, as Aristotle actually does attribute to it, however inconsistently, an ἔφεσις or tendency toward the Good.[1] This affection or ἔφεσις it is which is the real efficient cause of the motion of the universe. We may question the success of the Aristotelian identification of the efficient with the final cause. The efficient cause would seem to lie not in the attraction exerted by

[1] *Phys.* i. 9, 192 a 18.

the Ideal, but in the essential desire of Matter for the Ideal. The distinction may indeed be purely logical and the two, like Matter and Form, be united in fact. Attraction and desire are in operation one and the same thing. Still the bases of their operations are different and their metaphysical principles are distinct.

In the same way, if Matter is to be determined to "privation" as well as to form, we must suppose it to be possessed also of a very positive passivity. Its phenomenal character as incompleteness in things can only be attributed to some sort of real intractability. Its power of not becoming, like its power of becoming, must be a power exerted. But here also we get into difficulties. What is to account for the exertion of the power not to be, for the inclination, that is, not to realize the Good? Although the ἔφεσις of Matter for the Good may have to be conceived as *a priori*, innate, and not instilled by the Good, its existence is yet correlative to, and bound up with, the attraction of the Ideal. The contrary inclination in Matter should imply the existence of an anti-ideal. A positive cult of Evil, as well as of the Good, would have to be attributed to Matter; and the mixed and incomplete character of the world put down to the eternal hesitation of ὕλη between the attractions of God and the devil. Still, even admitting this, the situation is little relieved. Two equally positive tendencies toward Being and Not-being would amount to the same thing as the

strictest neutrality towards both. The fate of Buridan's ass, for example, would have been no less pathetic had it been equally indifferent instead of equally drawn to the two bales of hay. But if the one tendency is stronger than the other, what is to account for their inequality? If both are allowed to exist, both have exactly the same reason for existence, and therefore exactly the same strength.

Finally, though both tendencies must exist in Matter to some extent actualized, it is at the same time impossible to see how they can do so if the constancy of the imperfection in the universe, or even the existence of a mixed world of good and evil, is to be explained. How can Matter have at the same time an actual tendency towards becoming, and an actual tendency towards not becoming, this or that form? The unthinkableness of such a condition is recognized by Aristotle himself in his dictum that opposite determinations cannot exist at the same time, though they may be deduced from a common potentiality capable of becoming either one or the other.

Such are some of the perplexities which lurked in the Aristotelian conception of Matter as the indeterminate subject of all determinations. They might also seem to be involved in the Stoic assertion that Matter is without quality and receives its form from an active principle, λόγος or Reason or God, which permeates and animates it,[1] were it not for

[1] Diog. Laert. vii. p. 134; Seneca, *Ep.* 65. 2.

the monistic assertion that its compliance with the formative power is absolute and that its determinations in spite of appearances are all perfectly good. There was then considerable weight to the objection which Plotinus had to consider. It was not, however, the first appearance of the objection in outspoken form, nor was Plotinus the first to attempt to deal with it. It had challenged Plutarch, who had replied to it as follows: "When we talk about Matter, we must not go over to the opinions of some philosophers and say that it must be thought of as a kind of inanimate body, devoid of qualities, inert and inefficient of itself. We call oil the matter of a perfume and gold of a statue, though they are not in themselves devoid of all quality, and the soul itself and the thinking faculty of man we hand over to the reason to be ordered and harmonized, calling them the matter or material of knowledge and virtue. Some have made out also that the mind is the place of the ideas, and is, as it were, an impression from the seal of the intelligible world; and some again consider that the seed of a woman [ovum in women] is not the potentiality nor the source, but the matter and the sustenance of generation. Thus, if we agree with such views, we must conceive of this goddess (Matter) as having a share of the primal God, and as united to him by love of the goodness and beauty which surround him. She is never opposed to him; but just as we say that a just and law-abiding man is in love with justice, or that a

virtuous woman who has a husband with whom she lives, desires him, so we must say that Matter desires God, and is ever in his presence, and is filled with the most powerful and purest parts of him." [1]

Matter, then, *in* and *per se* cannot be the cause of imperfection. Its nature is not intractability, but complete acquiescence in the attraction of the divine. There must, Plutarch concludes, be a third principle no less actual and fundamental than God, but radically opposed to him. This principle he believes he has found in the Evil Soul of Plato's *Laws*. "Of those who attribute to Matter, rather than to the soul, that necessity which is spoken of in the *Timaeus*, and in discussing the *Philebus* attribute to Matter also that lack of measure and determination which has to do with the greater and the less of defect and excess, we may ask how they will dispose of the Platonic dictum that Matter is eternally formless and uncharacterized, devoid of all inherent quality and power, and like those odourless oils which perfumers employ for colouring purposes. It is impossible that what is in itself devoid of quality, inactive, and indifferent, should be assumed by Plato to be the cause and first principle of Evil, or that he should call indeterminateness base and evil-doing; or again, that he should describe it as necessity in constant revolt and rebellion against God. For as to that which he declares in the *Politicus* to reverse the motion of

[1] *De Is. et Osir.* 58.

heaven, namely, necessity and innate desire, and as to that disordered fusion of ancient Nature as it was before it was developed into the present world—how came they actually to exist, if what underlay them was Matter devoid of quality and of all causal power, whilst the Creator was good and wished to make all things like himself as far as lay within his power? For there was no third principle beside these two. Here, indeed, the Stoic difficulty overtakes us which introduces Evil from Not-being without cause or generation on the ground that it is not reasonable that either the good or the indifferent should have provided either the substance or the generation of Evil. But Plato did not fall into the same error as these later philosophers; nor did he overlook, as they did, this third principle and force intermediate between God and Matter, and maintain that most absurd of theories, namely, that which declares the nature of evil things to have crept in from some source or other accidentally and of its own accord. . . . On the contrary, he writes as follows in the *Politicus* concerning the world.[1] 'From God the constructor, the world received all that is good in it, but from a previous state came elements of evil and unrighteousness, which first of all passed thence into the world and were then transmitted to animate things.' And a little farther, 'As time went on there was more and more forgetting and the old discord again held sway and

[1] 73 A.

there was danger lest the world should be dissolved and fall again into a state of indetermination and confusion (*ἀνομοιότης*).' But confusion has nothing to do with Matter, which is devoid of quality and distinctions. Eudemus, however, like many others, ignorantly chides Plato with having declared Matter, which he calls repeatedly the mother and nurse of things, to be the root and origin of Evil. It is true that Plato calls Matter the mother and nurse, but the cause of Evil he makes that force which moves Matter and is distributed among bodies, a force disordered and irrational, yet not inanimate."[1] This he often calls necessity, but in the *Laws* he calls it quite openly the disorderly and evil-doing Soul,[2] . . . contrary and antagonistic to the Soul whose works are good.[3]

Numenius interprets Plato's statement in the *Laws* somewhat differently. The Evil Soul is not a principle extraneous to Matter and acting upon it, but expresses rather a hylozoistic quality in Matter; a living and positive recalcitrancy in it to the improving power of the Good. "Pythagoras and the Stoics are agreed that Matter is formless and without quality. But while Stoics say that it is neither good nor evil, Pythagoras makes it evil. In the former case, when asked, with reference to some evil encountered on the way, whence evils

[1] Plutarch, *De animae procreat. in Timaeo*, 6, 1014 E–7, 1015 E.

[2] *Id.*, *ib.* 6, 1014 D.

[3] *Id.*, *ib.* 7, 1015 F.

come, they plead that perversity is the cause of evils. But they have not explained as yet where perversity itself comes from, since according to them there are two first principles of things—God and Matter. God is the highest and all-excelling Good; Matter, as they think, is neither good nor evil. But Pythagoras says . . . that although Providence exists, evils also necessarily exist because Matter exists and is of an evil quality. But if the world be made of Matter, it is certain that it is made of a nature already vicious." Hence "Numenius praises Heracleitus for his reproof of Homer for invoking death and destruction upon the ills of life and for not realizing that he was pleased to demand the annihilation of the world, if Matter, which is the source of Evil, should be abolished. Plato is also praised by Numenius because he asserts that there are two World-Souls, the one most beneficent, the other malignant and evidently Matter. That whatever moves, however slightly, by its own inner and proper motion, is animate and possessed of a vegetative soul, is the law of all beings which are truly moved. And this Soul, indeed, is the author and master of that passible part of the soul in which there is something corporeal and mortal and like to the body, just as the rational part of the soul has for author Reason and God." [1]

In Philo, the Aristotelian difficulty appears again,

[1] Chalcidius, *In Timaeum Platonis*, 295 (Mullach, *Fragmenta*, ii. p. 244, Ed. 1860). Cf. 297.

complicated by an absence of even that discrimination which we find in Aristotle between πρώτη ὕλη and Matter plus a minimum of determination. Philo confuses both senses, talking of Matter now as absolutely without quality or determination, now as possessed of a definite evil character. It is "inanimate and immobile of itself, being moved and ordered and animated by the (divine) intellect."[1] It is "without quality or form,"[2] "discordant and capable of dissolution, and furthermore corruptible of itself, irregular and unequal." It is definable as that which in itself is without formal determination, and is therefore capable of becoming all things; as Not-being; also as the empty and wanting, or as the dark.[3] "God called Not-being into Being, order out of disorder, the quantitative out of the unquantitative, and likeness out of the unlike, and agreement and harmony out of the unagreed and discordant, and evenness out of the uneven, and light out of the darkness."[4] "For Matter was of itself dissolved, unqualified, inanimate, full of otherness and want of harmony and discordancy. But it received a change or transformation into the opposite and best conditions; order, quality, likeness, sameness, accord, harmony, and everything that belongs to the Ideal."[5]

[1] *De mund. opif.*

[2] *Quis rer. div. Her.* 500 C (492). Cf. *De mundi opif.* 4 E (5 M); *De prof.* 451 E (547); *De somnis*, 1114 B (665); *Quis rer. div. Her.* 503 (495), 4; *De prof.* 479 (475 C).

[3] Zeller, *Phil. der Griech.* III. ii. pp. 435–6.

[4] *De creat. princip.* 728 (367 M).

[5] *De mundi opif.* 5 A.

Self-contradictory as the position set forth in these quotations is, if taken at its face value, and little as Philo does towards further explanation of this meaning, the paradox is not really so glaring as it seems. The indeterminateness of Matter can in a way be reconciled with its evil character in a system as insistent upon metaphysical evil as is Philo's. The world is necessarily evil because it is not God, in whom alone the only kind of perfection is embodied. And Matter as the principle of individualization and of cosmic existence, however amenable it may be to the divine, and however faithful a copy of the Ideal it may reproduce, is evil in that it exists at all. It needs no malignant outer force to explain its intractability. The force which enables it to persist in its separate being is sufficient for that.

We come now to Plotinus's reply to the problem. "If Matter," he begins, "be without quality, how can it be evil? By its being without quality we mean that it possesses of itself none of those qualities which are received into it, and inhere in it as their substratum; but we do not mean that it has no nature of its own. If then it have a certain nature, what is to prevent this nature from being evil, though not indeed evil in the qualitative sense? For quality is that by predicating which something else is qualified. Quality, then, is an accident and a predicate. Matter, however, is not a predicate, but the substratum with which accidents are concerned. So because quality,

whose nature is to be an accident, is not attributed to it, Matter is said to be without quality. If, therefore, quality be itself without quality, how can Matter which has not received qualities be called qualitative? We are right in saying that it is both without quality, and also evil. For it is not called evil because it has quality, but because it has not. Otherwise, were it a form, although an evil one, it might still have a nature not contrary to Form." [1]

But, it may be objected, is not Matter qualified by just this lack of quality? "What is to prevent Matter, whose nature it is to participate in no other quality, from being qualified by precisely this non-participation, possessing as it does in any case a certain peculiarity of its own, and differing from other things by virtue of being deprived of them?" [2]

Plotinus's reply involves a discussion of the relation between *ὕλη* and *στέρησις* for which we are not

[1] i. 8, § 10 (79 c) [vol. i. p. 110, l. 8 *et seq.*]. *καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ταύτῃ. ἄποιος δὲ οὖσα πῶς κακή; ἢ ἄποιος λέγεται τῷ μηδὲν ἔχειν αὐτὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς τούτων τῶν ποιοτήτων, ἃς δέξεται καὶ [αἱ] ἐν αὐτῇ ὡς ὑποκειμένῳ ἔσονται, οὐ μὴν οὕτως, ὡς μηδεμίαν φύσιν ἔχειν. εἰ δὴ ἔχει τινὰ φύσιν, ταύτην τὴν φύσιν τί κωλύει κακὴν εἶναι, οὐχ οὕτω δὲ κακήν, ὡς ποιόν; ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὸ ποιὸν τοῦτό ἐστι, καθ' ὃ ἕτερον ποιὸν λέγεται. συμβεβηκὸς οὖν τὸ ποιὸν καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ· ἡ δὲ ὕλη οὐκ ἐν ἄλλῳ, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὑποκείμενον καὶ τὸ συμβεβηκὸς περὶ αὐτό. τοῦ οὖν ποιοῦ τὴν φύσιν συμβεβηκότος ἔχοντος οὐ τυχοῦσα ἄποιος λέγεται. εἰ τοίνυν καὶ ἡ ποιότης αὐτὴ ἄποιος, πῶς ἡ ὕλη οὐ δεξαμένη ποιότητα ποιὰ ἂν λέγοιτο; ὀρθῶς ἄρα λέγεται καὶ ἄποιος εἶναι καὶ κακή· οὐ γὰρ λέγεται κακὴ τῷ ποιότητα ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τῷ ποιότητα μὴ ἔχειν, ἵνα μὴ ᾖ ἴσως κακὴ εἶδος οὖσα, ἀλλὰ ἐναντία τῷ εἴδει φύσις.*

[2] ii. 4, § 13 [vol. i. p. 62, l. 4 *et seq.*]. *τί οὖν κωλύει ἄποιον μὲν εἶναι τῷ τῶν ἄλλων μηδεμιᾶς τῇ αὐτῆς φύσει μετέχειν, αὐτῷ δὲ τούτῳ τῷ μηδεμιᾶς μετέχειν ποιὰν εἶναι ἰδιότητα πάντως τινὰ ἔχουσαν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρουσαν, οἷον στέρησίν τινα ἐκείνων;*

quite ready. But so much of it as is immediately relevant is as follows: "The peculiar property of Matter is not Form, for it consists in not being qualified and not having any form. It is absurd to call Matter qualified because it is without quality; that would be like saying that through its very lack of magnitude it has magnitude. Its peculiar property then is not other than, or predicated of, itself, but lies rather in the relation it bears to other things, *i.e.* that it is none of them. Other things, however, are not merely other, but each is 'something,' that is, each has a form. But Matter might with propriety be called merely an 'other,' or perhaps 'other' in the plural, in order to emphasize its indeterminateness and not define it, as one would by calling it 'other' in the singular."[1]

The nature of Plotinus's emendation of the Aristotelian position must be plain. He agrees with Aristotle that Matter as the substratum of all determination is itself absolutely without form and quality. But he disagrees with him in the inference that Matter is therefore prior to good and evil and of itself neither good nor evil. This inference, as we have seen, Aristotle was unable to

[1] ii. 4, § 13 [vol. i. p. 162, l. 32 *et seq.*]. *ἡ τε ἰδιότης τῆς ὕλης οὐ μορφή· τὸ γὰρ μὴ ποιὰ εἶναι μηδ' εἶδός τι ἔχειν· ἄτοπον δή, ὅτι μὴ ποιά, ποιὰν λέγειν καὶ ὅμοιον τῷ, ὅτι ἀμέγεθες, αὐτῷ τούτῳ μέγεθος ἔχειν. ἔστιν οὖν ἡ ἰδιότης αὐτῆς οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ ὅπερ ἔστι, καὶ οὐ πρόσκειται ἡ ἰδιότης, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐν σχέσει τῇ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα, ὅτι ἄλλο αὐτῶν. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα οὐ μόνον ἄλλα, ἀλλὰ καί τι ἕκαστον ὡς εἶδος, αὕτη δὲ πρεπόντως ἂν λέγοιτο μόνον ἄλλο· τάχα δὲ ἄλλα, ἵνα μὴ τῷ ἄλλο ἑνικῶς ὁρίσῃς, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἄλλα τὸ ἀόριστον ἐνδείξῃ.*

justify, but had always to treat Matter as if it were possessed of a positively evil character. In so doing Plotinus would assert that Aristotle was right, and right also in denying to Matter all quality and determination. The latter's confusion lies in considering the opposition between good and evil to be an ordinary case of ἐναντίωσις between contrary determinations. This is not true. Good and evil are opposed as determinateness and indeterminateness. To assert, as Aristotle does, that they represent contrary formations of a neutral Matter is covertly to ascribe the cause of Evil to Form, not Matter.

Plutarch then was right in his demand for a positive malignant power as an explanation of Evil. But this demand rested upon precisely the same misunderstanding of the true nature of Matter and of the opposition between good and evil as that of Aristotle; and, in the ascription to it of an ἔφεσις or appetite for the Good, upon a greater misunderstanding. For Matter is without quality, as Aristotle says.

But this lack of quality does not imply lack of significance in point of value. Matter is not, because it is indeterminate, a substratum equally indifferent and hence equally compliant to determination to good and ill. For *all determination is good.* To speak of determination to the bad is a contradiction in terms. All the properties and qualities that inhere in and give structure to Matter are lent to it by the seminal reasons, the outgoing and formative powers of the archetypal and perfect

world. Quality, then, *qua* quality is good. Its origin forbids it to be otherwise. The difference between qualities, the opposition between different determinations, the ἐναντίωσις of "this" and "not-this-but-that" are purely logical and involve no comparison in point of moral value. They express merely the multiple, but harmonious content of the intelligible world.

It is only when I oppose to a thing its blank negation, to wit, a mere "not-this," without any specification of a "that," that I am opposing evil to good. To say that I am no kind of an angel, but a man, is merely to oppose one determination to another in the sense of distinguishing one form of being from another. It carries no reproach. But to say simply that I am no kind of a man, is to imply that I am deficient in a nature properly mine, that I am not the man I am entitled to be by virtue of my species.

The opposition, however, in the latter sense of myself to not-myself, or of "this" to "not-this," is not extrinsic, but intrinsic. It is not the opposition of one determination to another, but of the blank absence of a specific determination to its presence. Such an opposition may indeed be described as an ἐναντίωσις, and as we know, Plotinus talks of Evil as the opposite of the Good. But the opposition implied in it is not the ordinary opposition of one thing to another, not the failure of one thing to be another signified by "not-this-but-that," not the

negation of one determination or quality by its opposite, but its negation by an intrinsic lack of its proper self.[1] Evil, in a word, is a case not of ἕτερον, but of μή.

In some such way, I take it, Plotinus would have argued, had we gone to him with our perplexities. But his argument, though a fair criticism and a valid attempt at correction of the Aristotelian contradictions, is yet rather a sign than a solution of the difficulties in question. For how, we may ask, is it possible to ascribe "a certain nature," φύσιν τινὰ, to that which is absolutely without quality or determination? How can that be said to exist which is the mark or essence or substratum, not of the merely relative non-existence, the "not-this-but-that," implied by the Platonic ἕτερον, but of the absolute non-existence of a thing in relation to its entelechy? In fine, Plotinus has involved himself in all the difficulties of the proposition that Not-being exists.

Had he, indeed, been consistently mystic, he might have escaped. For him in that case, as for Philo, the ἕτερον of the *Sophist* would have been a sufficient sign of imperfection. "Not-this-but-that," when opposed to God would have involved Evil by the mere fact of its opposition. The not-divine, however full of positive content it might be, could not have been other than not-good. Matter as the mere principle of the differentiation of the

[1] ii. 4, § 16 (169 D) [vol. i. p. 115, l. *22 et seq.*].

world from the Deity would have been necessarily a principle of evil and its individuation of opposite determinations within the world would have been no more than a hierarchy of imperfections. So-called grades of perfection would have appeared in their true light.

Or again, the naturalist might have avoided the pitfall. He, in Platonic fashion, might have reduced μὴ ὄν to ἕτερον, the absolute "not-this," to the relative "not-this-but-that," and then, following Plotinus, have declared all determinations good after their kind, and "this" as good as "that." The result would have been the familiar naturalistic world.

But Plotinus, as we have had occasion to remark so many times, tries to combine the two positions and falls between two stools. On the one hand, he treats different forms of being as different kinds of perfection; on the other, as various degrees of imperfection. More concretely, everything that is, is determined, and determined in some way or other at every moment of its existence, and every determination is by and to the Good, yet at the same time nothing at any moment of its existence is determined as it should be. I, for example, am what I am from instant to instant, and am completely that; yet I am not perfect. Again the lack of any particular determination is treated both as the presence of some other determination and as the absence of itself. That is,

negation is considered both as differentiation and as absolute absence of being—two points of view perfectly compatible as long as one does not seek to draw from them diametrically opposed metaphysical deductions, whose contradictions one declines to recognize because of the compatibility of the original propositions.

Again, Not-being is not nothing and yet is not anything. In so far as it is anything, it is positive, not negative, Being, not Not-being. Hence it stands for good, not evil. But if it is nothing, then what it stands for and supports is nothing, and there is no such thing as Evil. Plotinus, in fine, could neither deny nor affirm the existence of the basis of Evil without leaving Evil metaphysically baseless. The possibility of holding a middle course was doubtless suggested by the analogy of darkness, which is the absence of sight and yet is seen. But the Matter in which such a string of paradoxes could harmoniously inhere could not be otherwise than paradoxical.

To return now to the Plotinian argument. It may be objected, he says, "that the nature opposite to all Form is privation, and that privation always inheres in something else and is not of itself an hypostasis; and hence, that if Evil lie in privation, it will also inhere in what is deprived of Form and so will not exist in and for itself. Let us apply this argument to the soul. If Evil be privation, vice will consist in a privation of good within the

soul and be not due to anything external. But "if the privation be of some form that happens to be present, and be a privation of good in the soul, then the soul produces the evil within herself by virtue of her own seminal reason, and has nothing good about her; and in that case, though she is a soul, no life."[1] In other words, vice in itself requires an explanation. If it be a privation of the soul, it is nothing external to the soul in nature, but inherent in her essence, since the meaning of στέρησις is that a thing lacks in and of itself the quality in question. But this is to say, that the soul lacks in and of herself the Good. But according to the Plotinian doctrine, the Good is the source and principle of life. Hence the soul will also in and of herself lack life, and be soulless. This, however, is a contradiction, for the essence of the soul is life. It follows that the soul is not deprived of good by her own nature, for her nature is good.

Still, may not Evil be a partial privation? This, replies Plotinus, also involves a contradiction. For then, part of the soul will possess and part will be deprived of the Good, and her experience will be mixed. There will be no such thing as unmixed and primal Evil in us. That is, the soul cannot by virtue of the same essence be both good and evil.[2]

[1] i. 8, § 11 (p. 79) [vol. i. p. 110, l. 26 *et seq.*]. See note below.

[2] See continuation from reference just quoted. The discussion and quotation are taken from the text appended. 11. ἀλλ' ἡ ἐναντία τῷ εἴδει παντὶ φύσις στέρησις· στέρησις δὲ ἀεὶ ἐν

In the treatise on Matter, the relations of privation to Matter are taken up in a more general way. First there is a preface *à propos* of the objection lately reviewed, that Matter would seem to be a privation (*στέρησις*) or lack, and that privation is certainly a quality. The deprived, the argument runs, is qualified by its deprivation. For example, the blind man is qualified by his lack of sight. And if any single privation qualifies its subject, how much more will privation in all respects?

But Plotinus answers: "This is really to turn everything, even quantities and essences, into qualified things or qualities. And if a thing be qualified, quality is present in it. It is absurd, however, to make a quality of what is other than quality and is

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ἄλλῳ καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῆς οὐχ ὑπόστασις· ὥστε τὸ κακὸν εἰ ἐν στερήσει, ἐν τῷ ἐστερημένῳ εἴδους τὸ κακὸν ἔσται· ὥστε καθ' ἑαυτὸ οὐκ ἔσται. εἰ οὖν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἔσται κακόν, ἡ στέρησις ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ κακὸν καὶ ἡ κακία ἔσται καὶ οὐδὲν ἔξω. ἐπεὶ καὶ ἄλλοι λόγοι τὴν ὕλην ὅλως ἀναιρεῖν ἀξιοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ οὐδ' αὐτὴν κακὴν εἶναι οὖσαν. οὐδὲν οὖν δεῖ ἄλλοθεν ζητεῖν τὸ κακόν, ἀλλὰ θέμενον ἐν ψυχῇ οὕτω θέσθαι ἀπουσίαν ἀγαθοῦ εἶναι. ἀλλ' εἰ ἡ στέρησις ἐπιβάλλοντός ἐστι παρεῖναι εἴδους τινός, εἰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ στέρησις ἐν ψυχῇ, τὴν δὲ κακίαν ἐν αὐτῇ ποιεῖ τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἑαυτῆς, ἡ ψυχὴ οὐδὲν ἔχει ἀγαθόν· οὐ τοίνυν οὐδὲ ζωὴν οὖσα ψυχή. ἄψυχον ἄρα ἔσται ἡ ψυχή, εἴπερ μηδὲ ζωήν· ὥστε ψυχὴ οὖσα οὐκ ἔσται ψυχή. ἔχει ἄρα τῷ ἑαυτῆς λόγῳ ζωήν· ὥστε οὐ στέρησιν ἔχει τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ παρ' αὐτῆς. ἀγαθοειδὲς ἄρα ἔχουσά τι ἀγαθὸν νοῦ ἴχνος καὶ οὐ κακὸν παρ' αὐτῆς· οὐκ ἄρα οὐδὲ πρώτως κακὸν οὐδὲ συμβεβηκός τι αὐτῇ τὸ πρώτως κακόν, ὅτι μηδὲ ἄπεστιν αὐτῆς πᾶν τὸ ἀγαθόν. 12. τί οὖν, εἰ μὴ παντελῆ στέρησιν λέγοι ἀγαθοῦ τὴν κακίαν καὶ τὸ κακὸν τὸ ἐν ψυχῇ, ἀλλά τινα στέρησιν ἀγαθοῦ; ἀλλ' εἰ τοῦτο, τὸ μὲν ἔχουσα, τοῦ δὲ ἐστερημένη, μικτὴν ἕξει τὴν αἴσθησιν καὶ οὐκ ἄκρατον τὸ κακόν, καὶ οὕπω εὕρηται τὸ πρῶτον καὶ ἄκρατον κακόν· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀγαθὸν τῇ ψυχῇ ἔσται ἐν οὐσίᾳ, συμβεβηκὸς δέ τι τὸ κακόν.

not quality."[1] The thread of the argument is hard to trace, but Plotinus's meaning seems to be:— If you say that *στέρησις* or privation is a quality, then you might as well call quantities or essences qualities too. It is certainly no more absurd. And again, how can a thing be qualified by being unqualified? How can the absence of an attribute be attributed to it? But, the text proposes, we may perhaps call what is other than qualified, qualified, because what is "other" is thereby qualified. What is it that is "other"? is the reply. If it be "otherness," then it is not a qualified thing, because quality is not itself qualified. If it be merely "other," it is not other in itself, but only by virtue of participation in difference, and the same by participation in sameness. In short, the difference of one thing from another is not an attribute of either thing. It adds nothing to, and in no way qualifies its essence. Difference is a category not a quality, a statement of the fact that there is a plurality of beings, not of what these beings may be.

What, then, is the relation of privation to

[1] ii. 4, § 13 (167 c) [vol. i. p. 162, l. 19 *et seq.*]. *εἰ οὖν στέρησις τούτων περὶ αὐτήν, πῶς οὐ ποιά; εἰ δὲ καὶ ὅλως στέρησις περὶ αὐτήν, ἔτι μᾶλλον, εἴ γε δὴ καὶ στέρησις ποιόν τι. ὁ δὲ ταῦτα λέγων τί ἄλλο ἢ ποιὰ καὶ ποιότητας πάντα ποιεῖ; ὥστε καὶ ἡ ποσότης ποιότης ἂν εἴη καὶ ἡ οὐσία δέ. εἰ δὲ ποιόν, πρόσεστι ποιότης. γελοῖον δὲ τὸ ἕτερον τοῦ ποιοῦ καὶ μὴ ποιὸν ποιὸν ποιεῖν. εἰ δέ, ὅτι ἕτερον, ποιόν, εἰ μὲν αὐτοετερότης, οὐδ' ὡς ποιόν· ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἡ ποιότης ποιά· εἰ δ' ἕτερον μόνον, οὐχ ἑαυτῇ, ἀλλ' ἑτερότητι ἕτερον καὶ ταυτότητι ταὐτόν. οὐδὲ δὴ ἡ στέρησις ποιότης οὐδὲ ποιόν, ἀλλ' ἐρημία ποιότητος ἢ ἄλλου, ὡς ἡ ἀψοφία ψόφου ἢ ὁτουοῦν ἄλλου· ἄρσις γὰρ ἡ στέρησις, τὸ δὲ ποιὸν ἐν καταφάσει.*

Matter? This is the question which we now attack. Are they two concepts of one and the same substratum? If so, then the two concepts must reciprocally involve one another, or at least one of the two must imply the other. Are they related as, for example, snub and nose? In that case, they will be two. Or, are they related as fire and heat, where the essence of heat involves reference to fire, but not that of fire to heat? In that case, privation will be a form of Matter, but not the substratum itself.[1]

Or, are Matter and privation one substantially, though logically distinguished, in the sense that privation marks not a positive character of Matter, but signifies negatively that absence of Being which Matter is? But if privation be Matter by virtue of its negative character, its indetermination, and indefiniteness, and lack of quality, that is, by the identity of its concept with that of Matter, how comes it that we ever distinguish its concept from that of Matter?[2]

[1] ii. 4, § 14 (168 A) [vol. i. p. 163, l. 10 *et seq.*].

[2] ii. 4, § 14 (168 C) [vol. i. p. 163, l. 29 *et seq.*]. The discussion is based on the appended text. 15. *πάλιν οὖν ζητητέον, εἰ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς τὸ ἄπειρον καὶ τὸ ἀόριστον ἐπ' ἄλλῃ φύσει καὶ πῶς συμβεβηκὸς καὶ εἰ στέρησις συμβέβηκεν. εἰ δὴ ὅσα μὲν ἀριθμοὶ καὶ λόγοι ἀπειρίας ἔξω—ὅροι γὰρ καὶ τάξεις καὶ τὸ τεταγμένον καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις παρὰ τούτων, τάττει δὲ ταῦτα οὐ τὸ τεταγμένον οὐδὲ τάξις, ἀλλὰ ἄλλο τὸ ταττόμενον παρὰ τὸ τάττον, τάττει δὲ τὸ πέρας καὶ ὅρος καὶ λόγος—ἀνάγκη τὸ ταττόμενον καὶ ὁριζόμενον τὸ ἄπειρον εἶναι. τάττεται δὲ ἡ ὕλη καὶ ὅσα δὲ μὴ ὕλη τῷ μετέχειν ἢ ὕλης λόγον ἔχειν· ἀνάγκη τοίνυν τὴν ὕλην τὸ ἄπειρον εἶναι, οὐχ οὕτω δὲ ἄπειρον, ὡς κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς καὶ τῷ συμβεβηκέναι τὸ ἄπειρον αὐτῇ. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τὸ συμβαῖνόν τῳ δεῖ λόγον εἶναι· τὸ δὲ ἄπειρον οὐ λόγος· ἔπειτα τίνι ὄντι τὸ ἄπειρον συμβήσεται; πέρατι καὶ πεπερασμένῳ. ἀλλ' οὐ*

We have now raised the question of the relation of the indeterminate to Matter. Is it an attribute, the attribute of indetermination inherent in another subject than itself? "Numbers and seminal reasons are determinate, and are principles of determination. What is determined by them must be in itself undetermined. But a thing's indeterminateness cannot inhere in it as a property, since all properties are determinations. They are, moreover, seminal reasons, and the indeterminate cannot be a seminal reason. For in what could the indeterminate inhere? In the determined? But the determined is not a subject of

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πεπερασμένον οὐδὲ πέρας ἡ ὕλη. καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον δὲ προσελθὸν τῷ πεπερασμένῳ ἀπολεῖ αὐτοῦ τὴν φύσιν· οὐ τοίνυν συμβεβηκὸς τῇ ὕλῃ τὸ ἄπειρον· αὐτὴ τοίνυν τὸ ἄπειρον. ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ἡ ὕλη τὸ ἄπειρον καὶ εἴη ἂν γεννηθὲν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀπειρίας ἢ δυνάμεως ἢ τοῦ ἀεί, οὐκ οὔσης ἐν ἐκείνῳ ἀπειρίας ἀλλὰ ποιοῦντος. πῶς οὖν ἐκεῖ καὶ ἐνταῦθα; ἢ διττὸν καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον. καὶ τί διαφέρει; ὡς ἀρχέτυπον καὶ εἴδωλον. ἐλαττόνως οὖν ἄπειρον τοῦτο; ἢ μᾶλλον· ὅσῳ γὰρ εἴδωλον πεφευγὸς τὸ εἶναι τὸ ἀληθές, μᾶλλον ἄπειρον. ἡ γὰρ ἀπειρία ἐν τῷ ἧττον ὁρισθέντι μᾶλλον· τὸ γὰρ ἧττον ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ μᾶλλον ἐν τῷ κακῷ. τὸ ἐκεῖ οὖν μᾶλλον ὂν εἴδωλόν πως ἄπειρον, τὸ δὲ ἐνταῦθα ἧττον [ὄν], ὅσῳ πέφευγε τὸ εἶναι τὸ ἀληθές, εἰς δὲ εἰδώλου κατερρύη φύσιν, ἀληθεστέρως ἄπειρον. τὸ αὐτὸ οὖν τὸ ἄπειρον καὶ τὸ ἀπείρῳ εἶναι; ἢ ὅπου λόγος καὶ ὕλη ἄλλο ἑκάτερον, ὅπου δὲ ὕλη μόνον ἢ ταὐτὸν λεκτέον ἢ ὅλως, ὃ καὶ βέλτιον, οὐκ εἶναι ἐνθάδε τὸ ἀπείρῳ εἶναι· λόγος γὰρ ἔσται, ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῷ ἀπείρῳ, ἵν' ᾖ ἄπειρον. ἄπειρον μὲν δὴ παρ' αὐτῆς τὴν ὕλην λεκτέον ἀντιτάξει τῇ πρὸς τὸν λόγον. καὶ γάρ, ὥσπερ ὁ λόγος οὐκ ἄλλο τι ὢν ἐστι λόγος, οὕτω καὶ τὴν ὕλην ἀντιτεταγμένην τῷ λόγῳ κατὰ τὴν ἀπειρίαν οὐκ ἄλλο τι οὖσαν λεκτέον ἄπειρον. 16. ἆρ' οὖν καὶ ἑτερότητι ταὐτόν; ἢ οὔ, ἀλλὰ μορίῳ ἑτερότητος ἀντιταττομένῳ πρὸς τὰ ὄντα κυρίως, ἃ δὴ λόγοι. διὸ καὶ [τὸ] μὴ ὂν οὕτως τι ὂν καὶ στερήσει ταὐτόν, εἰ ἡ στέρησις ἀντίθεσις πρὸς τὰ ἐν λόγῳ ὄντα. οὔκουν φθαρήσεται ἡ στέρησις προσελθόντος τοῦ οὗ στέρησις; οὐδαμῶς· ὑποδοχὴ γὰρ ἕξεως οὐχ ἕξις, ἀλλὰ στέρησις, καὶ πέρατος οὐ τὸ πεπερασμένον οὐδὲ τὸ πέρας, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἄπειρον καθ' ὅσον ἄπειρον. πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἀπολεῖ αὐτοῦ

properties, since Matter is not determined. Moreover, the indeterminate would destroy the nature of the determined. The indeterminate, then, is not a property of Matter, but its very self." [1]

But what is it that is indeterminate? Are the indeterminate (*τὸ ἄπειρον*) and "being indeterminate" (*τὸ ἀπείρῳ εἶναι*) the same? They are not the same, is the answer, when Reason as well as Matter is involved. In the case of any *thing*, we might say, we can distinguish between its indeterminateness and that which is indeterminate; in other words, between the reason or λόγος which constitutes its essence, and the blurring of that essence by the vagueness of Matter. But where we are concerned with Matter alone, the two are the same, or better still, one cannot appropriately apply the phrase *τὸ ἀπείρῳ εἶναι*, "being indeterminate," at all.[2] When we talk

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τὴν φύσιν προσελθὸν τὸ πέρας καὶ ταῦτα οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὄντος ἀπείρου; ἢ εἰ μὲν κατὰ τὸ ποσὸν ἄπειρον, ἀνῄρει [ἂν]· νῦν δὲ οὐχ οὕτως, ἀλλὰ τοὐναντίον σώζει αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ εἶναι· ὃ γὰρ πέφυκεν εἰς ἐνέργειαν καὶ τελείωσιν ἄγει, ὥσπερ τὸ ἄσπαρτον, ὅταν σπείρηται· καὶ ὅταν τὸ θῆλυ [ἐκ] τοῦ ἄρρενος κυῇ, οὐκ ἀπόλλυται τὸ θῆλυ, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον θηλύνεται· τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν ὃ ἔστι μᾶλλον γίνεται. ἆρ' οὖν καὶ κακὸν ἡ ὕλη μεταλαμβάνουσα ἀγαθοῦ; ἢ διὰ τοῦτο, ὅτι ἐδεήθη· οὐ γὰρ εἶχε. καὶ γὰρ ὃ μὲν ἂν δέηταί τινος, τὸ δ' ἔχῃ, μέσον ἂν ἴσως γίνοιτο ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ, εἰ ἰσάζοι πως ἐπ' ἄμφω· ὃ δ' ἂν μηδὲν ἔχῃ ἄτε ἐν πενίᾳ ὄν, μᾶλλον δὲ πενία ὄν, ἀνάγκη κακὸν εἶναι. οὐ γὰρ πλούτου πενία τοῦτο οὐδὲ ἰσχύος, ἀλλὰ πενία μὲν φρονήσεως, πενία δὲ ἀρετῆς κάλλους, μορφῆς, εἴδους, ποιοῦ. πῶς οὖν οὐ δυσειδές; πῶς δὲ οὐ πάντη αἰσχρόν; πῶς δὲ οὐ πάντη κακόν; ἐκείνη δὲ ἡ ὕλη ἡ ἐκεῖ ὄν· τὸ γὰρ πρὸ αὐτῆς ἐπέκεινα ὄντος. ἐνταῦθα δὲ τὸ πρὸ αὐτῆς ὄν. οὐκ ὂν ἄρα αὐτὴ ἕτερον ὂν πρὸς τῷ καλῷ τοῦ ὄντος.

[1] ii. 4, § 15 (168 E) [vol. i. p. 164, l. 12 *et seq.*].

[2] As we shall see in a moment, this does not apply to the intelligible world.

of a thing "*being* indeterminate," we imply the presence of a seminal reason which *is* rendered indeterminate by Matter. But Matter is not undetermined by virtue of a seminal reason of indeterminateness. It is undetermined in and of itself, and its indeterminateness means opposition to and absence of reason. Indeed "just as Reason is Reason and nothing else, so Matter, which is opposed to Reason and is nothing except indeterminateness, must be called indeterminate."[1]

Is Matter the same as "otherness" or "difference"? No, but it is the same as a part of difference, difference from Reason and Being. In a sense, then, continues Plotinus, Not-being is something and is the same as privation, if by privation we mean opposition to Being, which is Being in so far as it is rational.[2]

But how can a thing both be and be in a state of privation? Is this not to say that it both is and is not? This seems to be the meaning of the query, "will not the privation be destroyed by the advent of that of which it is the privation?" Not at all, is the reply. Privation is not a mode, but the subject or receptacle of modes. It will not be destroyed, but merely modified by its modifications. In the same way the subject of determinations is not the determined or determination itself, but the undetermined *qua* undetermined. The object is not modified by two opposite determinations at the

[1] ii. 4, § 15 (169 c) [vol. i. p. 165, l. 19 *et seq.*].
[2] ii. 4, § 16 (169 d) [vol. i. p. 165, l. 22 *et seq.*].

same time, but its determinations, congruous in themselves, are weakened or blurred by the stuff or subject they modify.[1] This point has already been discussed in considering Plotinus's treatment of the Aristotelian paradox.

The objection, however, persists. Must not determination and limitation destroy by their advent the nature of the undetermined, which is not undetermined adjectively, but in itself? The trouble is, answers Plotinus, that we are thinking of the indeterminate as a quantity. Were it quantitatively indeterminate, it would be destroyed. But it is not quantitatively indeterminate. As it is, the indeterminate is endowed with being, actuality, and perfection by the advent of determination and definition, as the unsowed field by seed, or as the female nature by its union with the male.[2]

Does Matter, then, remain evil when united with the Good? Certainly, for the reason that it needed the Good and had it not. "But what needs and has something else, stands half-way between good and evil if it be impartial toward both. But what has nothing, because it is in poverty or rather is poverty itself, must needs be evil."[3]

It cannot be said that we reach any very definite conclusions regarding the nature of ὕλη and στέρησις in these passages. In a sense we are told, indeed, that Not-being is the same as στέρησις, and στέρησις

[1] ii. 4, § 16 (169 E) [vol. i. p. 165, l. 26 *et seq.*].
[2] ii. 4, § 16 (69 E) [vol. i. p. 165, l. 30 *et seq.*].
[3] ii. 4, § 16 (169 E) [vol. i. p. 166, l. 8 *et seq.*].

certainly denotes that absence of form, determination, and quality which is the essence, if we may use the word, of Matter. Moreover, στέρησις is not a state, but the receptacle or substratum of a state. And yet it is not the same as Matter. It is adjectival and secondary. It is intrinsic, whereas vice is extrinsic. Thus if vice were στέρησις we should have to define the infirm soul as an essence by nature bereft of the Good. But on the other hand, στέρησις is not a form or a determination. The nature of a thing cannot be defined by its lack of its nature.

I confess I am unable to make much sense of these apparent contradictions. My interpretation is no more than tentative. But I think Plotinus's underlying thought is something as follows: Στέρησις or privation is involved in the predication of any kind of difference. Thus if I say I am not an angel, but a man, my manhood implies a lack in me of angelic nature, and of all forms save the human. Such a lack is in truth a kind of negative definition. It tells me what I am not, but it implies that I am something, and though it leaves that something undetermined, it does not declare it indeterminate. Still such definition is not true determination. To tell what I am not is not to tell what I am.

But, on the other hand, the negation involved in privation is so far without hint of that intrinsic negation or absence in me of my proper nature, of which vice is the symptom. It merely asserts my lack of natures other than my own, a lack which does

not in any wise detract from my proper perfection. The lack of my proper nature is due to Matter. This lack may indeed be described in terms of privation, as a privation in me of my entelechy, but it is a more special case of privation.

Privation, then, is not-being, both in the sense of not being one's self, and of not being another. In both cases it is adjectival and secondary, and in both an absence of determination. Hence in both it stands not for a positive state of an object, but for a condition subject to, or an aptitude for, further determination. But in the one case that further determination is the mere logical discovery of what the object is meant to be, in the other the moral task of seeing that it perfectly expresses its meaning. These considerations I have found helpful in clearing up the apparent paradoxes of the Plotinian argument.

So much for privation and its relations to Matter. But another question arises as regards the nature of vice. May not vice be an impediment in the soul? But in that case the cause of the impediment will be absolute and primal Evil. Vice will not be the cause of the impediment, for it is not absolute Evil, just as virtue is not absolute Good. As we rise from and by means of virtue to the absolute Good, so from vice as a starting-point we descend to absolute Evil, first by looking upon it, if one can speak of seeing absolute Evil, and then by becoming evil through participation in it. And yet though the soul be fallen into evil and darkness, she cannot

become absolutely evil; she can only be more and more tainted by a nature other and worse than herself. She dies so far as she can die, and her death is to be engrossed with the body, sunk in, and filled with Matter.[1]

Or shall we call vice a weakness of the soul? But whence and what is this weakness? Is it to be likened to bodily indisposition, and traced to Matter which is the cause of disease? But the analogy will not hold. Vice cannot be described as a sickness, nor is the soul naturally material or subject to material dispositions. Moreover, the soul is not weak of herself. The soul that stands apart from Matter, winged as it were and unhindered in her operations, knows no weakness. Weakness, then, is extraneous, due to contact with Matter.[2]

But how does the soul, pure and strong in herself, ever get into contact with Matter. How can she fall? "If we get a clear and proper understanding of the cause of her fall, then her weakness which is the object of our investigation will be made evident. There is Matter in things, and there is also Soul, and there is, as it were, one place for both. Matter is not in one place and Soul in another, as if Matter's place were on earth, Soul's in the air. Rather is there a place apart for the soul, inasmuch as she is not in Matter, and this means that she is not united with Matter, and this

[1] i. 8, § 13 (80 c) [vol. i. p. 111, l. 23 *et seq.*].
[2] i. 8, § 14 (80 d) [vol. i. p. 112, l. 21 *et seq.*].

that one simple thing cannot be made out of her and Matter, and this again that she is not produced in Matter as a form in a substratum. This is the significance of saying that she is apart.

But the powers of the soul are many; and she has beginning, middle, and end. The Matter which is there demands more room and is, as it were, troublesome and wishes to gain an entrance. But the whole place is holy, and there is nothing there which does not partake of Soul. So in subjecting itself to Soul, Matter is illumined, but is not able to grasp the source of its illumination. The soul does not triumph over its presence and uplift it in spite of its presence, for the reason that she does not see it since it is evil. On the contrary the admixture of Matter darkens and weakens the illumination and the light from Soul, providing as it does generation and the cause whereby the soul enters into generation. For the soul would not of herself have come to what was not already present.

Such then is the fall of the soul—to come in this wise to Matter; she is weak, too, because all her powers are not operative, hindered as they are by Matter seizing the place which she possesses, and causing her to shrink, as it were, and making what it has stolen evil, until the soul is able to return to her own again. Matter, then, is the cause of weakness in the soul, and the cause of vice. It is antecedently evil, and is indeed the primal Evil. Moreover, if the soul when affected by Matter herself creates, and if

she communes with Matter, and becomes evil, it is Matter which by its presence is the cause. She would not have entered Matter, had she not, by her communion with it, undertaken the work of generation."[1]

The passage needs but little comment. In the first part Plotinus is apparently arguing against Aristotle. Soul and Matter, or to put it in Aristotelian language, Form and Matter have indeed the same "place." They are not separated spatially, Soul for instance in the heavens, Matter upon earth. But on the other hand there is not the intimate logical and substantial union between them that

[1] i. 8, § 14 (81 D) [vol. i. p. 113, l. 16 *et seq.*]. *τοῦ δὲ πτώματος τὸ αἴτιον ψυχῇ σαφέστερον λαμβάνουσι καὶ ὡς προσήκει λαβεῖν καταφανὲς ἔσται τὸ ζητούμενον. ἔστιν οὖν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ὕλη, ἔστι δὲ καὶ ψυχή, καὶ οἷον τόπος εἴς τις. οὐ γὰρ χωρὶς μὲν ὁ τόπος τῇ ὕλῃ, χωρὶς δ' αὖ ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς—οἷον ὁ μὲν ἐν γῇ τῇ ὕλῃ, ὁ δὲ ἐν ἀέρι τῇ ψυχῇ —ἀλλ' ὁ τόπος τῇ ψυχῇ χωρὶς τῷ μὴ ἐν ὕλῃ· τοῦτο δὲ τῷ μὴ ἐνωθῆναι τῇ ὕλῃ· τοῦτο δὲ τῷ μὴ ἕν τι ἐξ αὐτῆς καὶ ὕλης γενέσθαι· τοῦτο δὲ τῷ μὴ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ τῇ ὕλῃ γενέσθαι· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ χωρὶς εἶναι. δυνάμεις δὲ ψυχῆς πολλαὶ καὶ ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσα καὶ ἔσχατα ψυχὴ ἔχει· ὕλη δὲ παροῦσα προσαιτεῖ καὶ οἷον ἐνοχλεῖ καὶ εἰς τὸ εἴσω παρελθεῖν θέλει· πᾶς δὲ ὁ χῶρος ἱερὸς καὶ οὐδέν ἐστιν, ὃ ἄμοιρόν ἐστι ψυχῆς. ἐλλάμπεται οὖν ὑποβάλλουσα ἑαυτὴν καὶ ἀφ' οὗ μὲν ἐλλάμπεται οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν· οὐ γὰρ ἀνέχεται αὐτὴν ἐκεῖνο καίτοι παροῦσαν, ὅτι μὴ ὁρᾷ διὰ κάκην. τὴν δὲ ἔλλαμψιν καὶ τὸ ἐκεῖθεν φῶς ἐσκότωσε τῇ μίξει καὶ ἀσθενὲς πεποίηκε τὴν γένεσιν αὐτὴ παρασχοῦσα καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ εἰς αὐτὴν ἐλθεῖν· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἦλθε τῷ μὴ παρόντι. καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι πτῶμα τῆς ψυχῆς τὸ οὕτως ἐλθεῖν εἰς ὕλην, καὶ ἀσθενεῖ, ὅτι πᾶσαι αἱ δυνάμεις οὐ πάρεισιν εἰς ἐνέργειαν κωλυούσης ὕλης παρεῖναι τῷ τὸν τόπον ὃν κατέχει αὐτὴ καταλαβεῖν καὶ οἷον συσπειραθῆναι ποιῆσαι ἐκείνην, ὃ δὲ ἔλαβεν οἷον κλέψασα ποιῆσαι κακὸν εἶναι, ἕως ἂν δυνηθῇ ἀναδραμεῖν. ὕλη τοίνυν καὶ ἀσθενείας ψυχῇ αἰτία καὶ κακίας αἰτία. πρότερον ἄρα κακὴ αὐτὴ καὶ πρῶτον κακόν· καὶ γὰρ εἰ αὐτὴ ἡ ψυχὴ τῇ ὕλῃ ἐγέννησε παθοῦσα, καὶ εἰ ἐκοινώνησεν αὐτῇ καὶ ἐγένετο κακή, ἡ ὕλη αἰτία παροῦσα· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐγένετο εἰς αὐτὴν μὴ τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτῆς τὴν γένεσιν λαβοῦσα.*

Aristotle imagined. The finite form is separable from, and exists independent of, its particular. The soul is not the entelechy of the body, as Aristotle said; in Plotinian phrase, she is not united with Matter, nor does she exist in it as a substratum. Again, when Plotinus says that one "something" is not produced out of Soul and Matter, we may perhaps see a denial of the Aristotelian contention that the individual, not the universal, the τόδε τι composed of Form and Matter, and not the form alone is the real thing. Plato had asserted that the universal alone is real, and that the particular is but a mutilated fragment, or copy, or shadow of it. Plotinus cannot go quite so far because of his provision of an intelligible basis for particular souls, in his doctrine of Ideas of individuals. But it is the particular soul or form which is the real thing, the τόδε τι, not its union with Matter and body in a particular fleshly man. That union indeed is rather a diminution of its reality, a blurring of its definite and individual character by the principle of indetermination. Men's souls are individual, we might say, but their bodies are compounded of the same clay.

The rest of the passage but amplifies the conception of Matter as a detraction from, rather than an ingredient in, the real thing. Matter crowds the soul, as it were. It weakens the soul's powers as darkness does light. The soul fades into Matter. In this her fall consists. Matter, then, is the cause

of the soul's fall, and of the vice and sin involved. Were everything light, the soul's rays would not be diminished and absorbed. She would not have to illumine or create. Everything would be illuminated and created, or rather there would be nothing but illumination. Then nothing would be distinguishable from the One. The One would be all in all. Once more, Matter is the origin of Evil.

We may note in passing how with this ascription of Evil to Matter as its cause, any other than a nominal distinction between moral and physical evil is abolished. Moral evil may be described in terms of physical evil and *vice versa* with equal appropriateness. Thus on the one hand we may regard sin as merely one case of the universal failure of all mundane things to realize their entelechies — a failure due to the inadequacy of means to ends. On the other hand we may regard that inadequacy which is the *summum genus* of all physical evil as involved in the great cosmic fall and fading of ψυχή and λόγος into the darkness and not-being of Matter; that is, as implicated in what we may call the aggregate sin of all the particular souls and seminal reasons. The truth is, that a common definition is applicable to both. All evil, be it physical or moral, may be described as a corruption or darkening of the soul or seminal reason by Matter.

There remain one or two other aspects of Matter to be considered; Matter regarded as a physical substratum, and Matter in the intelligible world.

In his discussion of the first point Plotinus follows Aristotle. The necessity for such a substratum is proved by the Peripatetic appeal to the phenomena of change. Change is transformation. Qualities do not alter their natures, but things their qualities. There must then be something which passes from one to the other.[1]

What is this something? Plotinus proceeds to criticize the answer given by the hylozoists and atomists. Elements are determinations of Matter. Such is his general criticism. In greater detail he reviews Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Anaximander, and Leucippus.

Apparently misinterpreting Empedocles, he says that his elements show that they are not Matter by the fact that they are corruptible. Empedocles, as a matter of fact, had maintained their incorruptibility. Plotinus had better have argued that they are specific, and therefore a composite of Matter and Form. Against Anaxagoras he urges that νοῦς and Being must be prior to "the mixture," τὸ μίγμα. For the mixture must exist, must have Being as a substratum. If Being be mixed, then this "mixture" again must have a common ground, and so on till the simple be reached. Again if νοῦς be the creator, what is the use of having its material already created? Νοῦς is the principle that could and should impart form to it. Of itself Matter should be formless.

Anaximander he criticizes on the ground that he

[1] Cf. Aristotle, *Met.* Λ 2, 1069 b 3-9; 10, 1075 a 30-31.

means by the "indeterminate" a quantitative infinite (τὸ ἀδιεξίτητον). But a quantitative infinite cannot exist either in itself or as an attribute of any being. It cannot exist in itself, since the parts of such an infinite are themselves infinite. That is, the part would equal the whole. (One wonders what Plotinus would have said of self-repetitive series, and Cantor's mathematics of the infinite.) Nor could that of which such an infinity was predicated be in itself infinite, or simple, or Matter. Finally, the atoms of Leucippus are not Matter, for there is no such thing as an ultimate atom. There can be no end to the division of the corporeal. Moreover, combinations of atoms could never give rise to anything but combinations of atoms. The continuous, sensible world and the soul cannot be explained by it.

Plotinus concludes that the primal Matter, the Matter which underlies all elements and determinations, must be without any qualities primary or secondary. It has no colour, temperature, weight, texture, structure, magnitude, or composition. All such determinations, all determinations of every sort, must be introduced into it from without. Else it would be in part self-determined and positive. Had it, for example, magnitude, it would have a structure of its own, and would be not altogether plastic. All determinations, those of quantity as well as those of quality, are the work of seminal reasons.

If it be objected at this point that nothing can exist that has not magnitude, Plotinus replies that nothing

incorporeal has magnitude, yet the incorporeal exists. Matter is incorporeal in itself. Body and magnitude are determinations acquired by participation in Form.[1]

The second and more important thing to note is the distinction made by Plotinus between sensible and intelligible Matter. It may be objected, he says, that there is no such thing as intelligible Matter. Matter is indeterminate, what is intelligible is essentially determinate. The material object is compound, composed of Matter and Form, the intelligible, taken by itself, is apparently simple. Again, we arrive at the conception of Matter from the phenomenon of "becoming"; but in the intelligible world there is no change or alteration. Moreover, where could such a Matter come from? If it be generated, it must have a principle of its own; if it be eternal, there is still a plurality of principles. But in that case the plurality of worlds will be contingent in its existence; that is, will be due to the union of these principles, and each intelligible, like each sensible object, will be composite and corporeal. How then are we to deal with these difficulties?

Plotinus begins with a denial of the assertion that there is no indeterminateness in the intelligible world. Nor, he adds, need we necessarily look askance at indeterminateness as an indubitable sign of imperfection. It depends upon the kind of indeterminateness.

[1] For all this discussion see ii. 4, § 6 *et seq.* (162 c *et seq.*) [vol. i. p. 154, l. 29 *et seq.*].

Thus the soul is indeterminate relatively to νοῦς and Reason, by which she is given form and value. But this is not all. In the content of νοῦς itself we are able to make a distinction between Matter and Form. There are many Ideas, "and if the Ideas be many, they must have something in common, and since they differ from one another, each must also have something peculiar to itself. This something peculiar and differentiating is the form proper to each Idea. But if there be Form, there is also something which is formed, to which the principle of differentiation is applied."[1] How now shall we describe intelligible Matter? To answer this we must ask what the Ideas have in common. They all *are*, and all have unity. Blank, simple Being, then, is the Matter or substratum of all forms, and hence of the intelligible world.

Intelligible, however, is to be sharply distinguished from sensible Matter. "The divine Matter in grasping what determines it, gets a determinate and intelligible life. But sensible Matter, even when it becomes something determinate, is not even then living or thinking, but a mere corpse adorned." In other words, the intelligible Matter is completely assimilated to Form. Forms do not fall short of their true selves.

[1] ii. 4, § 4 (160) [vol. i. p. 152, l. 27 *et seq.*]. ὁ δὴ λογος ἡμῖν ὑποθεμένοις τὸ νῦν εἶναι τὰ εἴδη—δέδεικται γὰρ ἐν ἄλλοις—πρωτ. εἰ οὖν πολλὰ τὰ εἴδη, κοινόν μέν τι ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀναγκη εἶναι· καὶ δὴ καὶ ἴδιον, ᾧ διαφέρει ἄλλο ἄλλον. τοῦτο δὴ τὸ ἴδιον καὶ ἡ διαφορὰ ἡ χωρίζουσα ἡ οἰκεία ἐστὶ μορφή. εἰ δὲ μορφή, ἔστι καὶ τὸ μορφουμενον, περὶ ὃ ἡ διαφορά.

Another point of contrast is that intelligible Matter is a principle of eternal, and not of temporary, individuations. Sensible objects "become," and change into one another, but the intelligible world with all its distinctions simply is what it is without reference to any time.

Finally, intelligible Matter is closely connected with the category of Difference. "The Difference which is in the intelligible world for ever produces Matter, for it is the source of Matter, being the primal motion. Hence the primal motion is also called difference, because difference and motion arise together. The motion and the difference which proceeds from the first principle are undetermined and need the first principle for their determination. They are determined when they turn back to it; but before that both Matter and Difference are indeterminate and not yet good, and unlit as yet by the first principle. For if light proceed from it, that which receives the light cannot be said to possess it eternally, since there was a time before it received it, and possesses it as something alien, since the light proceeds from another principle than itself. So much by way of exposition, and perhaps more than is due, of Matter in the intelligible world."[1]

[1] Cf. ii. 4, § 5 (162 B) [vol. i. p. 154, l. 16 *et seq.*]. *καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἑτερότης ἡ ἐκεῖ ἀεί, ἣ τὴν ὕλην ποιεῖ· ἀρχὴ γὰρ ὕλης αὕτη, ἡ κίνησις ἡ πρώτη· διὸ καὶ αὕτη ἑτερότης ἐλέγετο, ὅτι ὁμοῦ ἐξέφυσαν κίνησις καὶ ἑτερότης· ἀόριστον δὲ καὶ ἡ κίνησις καὶ ἡ ἑτερότης ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου, κἀκείνου πρὸς τὸ ὁρισθῆναι δεόμενα· ὁρίζεται δέ, ὅταν πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐπιστραφῇ· πρὶν δὲ ἀόριστον καὶ τὸ ἕτερον καὶ οὔπω ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' ἀφώτιστον ἐκείνου. εἰ γὰρ παρ' ἐκείνου τὸ φῶς, τὸ δεχόμενον τὸ φῶς,*

It seems at first sight impossible to reconcile this treatment of Matter as coupled with Difference and finding therein its ἀρχή, with the statement but a few paragraphs back that Form is the principle of individuation, Matter the common element in the Ideas. Doubtless there may be here a real confusion in Plotinus's own thought. Yet the contradiction is not so serious as it appears. The category of Difference may be regarded as the source of intelligible Matter without any implication thereby that Matter is necessarily the principle of differentiation. Plotinus's real meaning seems to be that individuation in the intelligible as in the sensible world requires a substratum to be differentiated. Only things in the same universe and referable to some common *summum genus* (in this case "Being") can be compared with, or distinguished from, one another. The category of Difference then necessitates intelligible Matter. They are twin-born, as it were, from the One, and receive from it alike their being and their relations.

It should not surprise us, however, that we find it necessary to posit such a principle as intelligible Matter in νοῦς. The intelligible world is the archetype of the sensible world. But to be really the archetype of a composite world like our own, it too must be composite. There must be in it that which

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πρὶν δέξασθαι, φῶς οὐκ ἔχει ἀληθινόν, ἀλλὰ ἄλλο ὂν ἔχει, εἴπερ τὸ φῶς παρ' ἄλλου. καὶ περὶ μὲν τῆς ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ὕλης πλείω τῶν προσηκόντων παραγυμνωθέντα ταύτῃ.

corresponds to the material substratum in the sensible order. A cosmos means an ordering of Matter by Form. Nor could Form exist without something to receive it.[1] We must distinguish the Aristotelianism of this passage from that denial already noted, that the τόδε τι in the sensible world is the real thing, and that the form cannot exist without sensible embodiment. Contradictory as the statements may seem at first sight, the one is really a reinforcement of the other. Having denied the dependence of Form upon sensible embodiment for expression, Plotinus now shows how each form contains within itself the conditions of its own existence. It has, as it were, besides its earthly body, a spiritual body.

The analogy between the sensible and the intelligible world is further developed. Just as the structure of the sensible world is an image, or shadow, or outer semblance of the constitution of the intelligible world, so sensible Matter is but a shadow or image of the intelligible substratum. Intelligible Matter is true essence. In νοῦς there is no distinction between essence and existence.[2]

Again, *à propos* of the indeterminateness of Matter, and of intelligible Matter, its indeterminateness is conceived as begotten of the boundlessness of the One, whether of its power or of its eternity. The One is not indeterminate in itself, but creates the indeterminate; that is, the One is not indefinite,

[1] ii. 4, § 4 (161 A) [vol. i. p. 152, l. 27 *et seq.*].
[2] ii. 4, § 5 (161 E) [vol. i. p. 153, l. 18 *et seq.*].

but indefinable. The indefiniteness of intelligible Matter is the shadow of its indefinability. Sensible Matter, again, is a shadow of the intelligible. It is, however, more indeterminate than the intelligible, since it is further removed from the source of all truth and goodness.[1] We may say, in fine, that as sensible Matter is not-being in relation to the being of the intelligible world, so intelligible Matter is being in relation to the super-being of the One.[2]

We are now in a position to review briefly such aspects of the Plotinian theory of Matter as concern us. With the history and forbears of this theory we need not trouble ourselves. Suffice it to say that Plotinus follows Plato and Aristotle with little innovation. From Plato he takes his designation of Matter as not-being, "other," indeterminate, receptacle of being and determination; from Aristotle his description of it as without qualification or form, blank, potential, that which can become all things and is itself no thing. It has indeed for him, as for them, its function as the principle of the substantiality and solidity of the physical world, but in his case, as in theirs, its significance is more than cosmological. It means not merely that there is a world, but what the world is. It is a law or condition rather than the stuff of things. It marks a relation which the various parts of the world, including ourselves, bear to one another, and summarizes their behaviour.

[1] ii. 4, § 15 (169 A) [vol. i. p. 164, l. 29 *et seq.*].
[2] ii. 4, § 16 (170 B) [vol. i. p. 166, l. 15 *et seq.*].

That for which it stands, in their relation and behaviour, is a certain underbreeding in things, a lack of character and manner, a failure to be true to their true selves. Matter in a word might be described as a conceptual symbol for the fact that in the world the real is not ideal, and the ideal is not realized.

At the same time the Plotinian teaching modifies in some respects the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle. The ἕτερον of Plato tends to revert to its original μὴ ὄν. And the functions of Matter as the absolutely unqualified and indeterminate substratum of all oppositions, and as the principle and cause of Evil, left unrelated and even antagonistic in the Aristotelian system, are reconciled and related in an explanation satisfactory at least to Plotinus.

But, in a way, the most instructive modification of the older teaching touches Matter as a principle of individuation. This function, so important in the Platonic and Aristotelian treatment of Matter, is by Plotinus almost entirely denied to it. In him Matter is certainly not the principle of individuation in the intelligible world. It is rather the principle of its community and oneness, of that being and unity in which the Ideas all share in spite of their variety. The cause of their variety and individuality is to be found in the category of Difference, a category which says no more than that forms and particulars are different, and the secret of this fact lies hid in the bosom of the ineffable.

Again, sensible Matter cannot be called the

principle of individuation in the sensible world, so far as human beings are concerned. Each individual man has his own determining pattern laid up in the heaven of the intelligible order. Of particular things other than human it probably must be regarded as the individuating cause, though largely on negative rather than positive grounds. Plotinus does not seem to extend the theory of Ideas of individuals to other than rational souls, and nothing else than the refraction of Matter can explain the breaking of the seminal reason emanating from the universal into the myriad particulars.

These modifications of Plato and Aristotle, however, could not correct the fundamental contradiction in their doctrine of Matter. They could only serve clearly to expose what had been but latent and obscure in them. The contradiction rested upon two opposing tendencies of thought, namely the tendency towards mysticism and that towards naturalism. In the older systems neither of these tendencies was conscious of more than itself. At any rate neither had realized its essential hostility to the other. It seemed as if they could be combined in the same system. They lay down together like enemies in the dark, unaware of each other's identity.

But in the history that intervened between Plato and Plotinus, both had become self-conscious and mature. The naturalistic tendency had fulfilled itself in the naked mechanicalism of the Epicureans and the draped naturalism of the Stoics. The

mystic tendency had found its expression in the pre-Plotinian Neo-Platonism. Any system henceforth that should combine them could not but be rent and twisted by their conflict.

The results of this conflict we have had frequent occasion to note, even within the professedly Stoic part of the Plotinian theodicy, in the constant recurrence there of the confusion between degrees of imperfection and kinds of perfection. We may note it again in the maintenance, along with such a theodicy, of a theory of intractable Matter, to all intents and purposes dualistic. And now we find it within that dualism itself confusing Plotinus's treatment of the material principle.

The confusion in question centres about the functions of Matter as a principle of individuation and as a principle of indeterminateness. In Plato and Aristotle this confusion had been quite innocent, so far as the phenomenal world was concerned. Matter was the ground of the differentiation of particulars from one another and from their appropriate Ideas or Forms. Such differentiation quite properly carried with it an implication of indeterminateness and imperfection. The particular was imperfect by virtue of its difference from its form, and as no two particulars of the same species could differ from one another without at the same time deviating from their common standard, to be an individual at all was necessarily to be imperfect. The result was a correct theory of metaphysical evil so far

as sensible objects were concerned. For Plato the particular was by virtue of its particularity a poor copy of the Idea. For Aristotle the particular, though real, was doomed to imperfection by that imperfect assimilation of Form which made it individual. Not to lose one's self in the Idea, not to become purely typical and universal, was not to realize one's perfection.

As regards, however, differences within the intelligible, as for example between Ideas or Forms, both Plato and Aristotle are silent. Such difference is an ultimate datum, an axiom. On the one hand, they could not deduce it, as did Plotinus, from a higher unity; though the rudiments of such deduction may be discerned in the Platonic dependence of the Ideas upon the Idea of the Good. But with Plato the deduction is only rudimentary, and with Aristotle uncertainty regarding the relation of the other Forms to God leaves no room for it. On the other hand, intelligible individuation could not be ascribed to Matter. For Matter in the Platonic system is precisely that which differentiates the sensible from the intelligible world. And though Aristotle speaks of an intelligible matter,[1] it had to designate for him as for Plotinus not the principle by which one form is distinguished from another, but rather the common and connecting bond and substratum, the *summum genus* of which all forms may be regarded as species.[2] Ideas embody them-

[1] *Met.* H 6, 1045 a, Z 11, 1036 b. [2] *Met.* H 2, 1043 a.

selves; each in itself is its own and only particular, ἓν ἄρα καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ. If one had demanded a reason for the plurality or individuation of the Ideas, it could only have been found in another Idea. But for this determining Idea yet another Idea would have been necessary. Thus the principle of individuation of the intelligible world would have been at the end of an infinite self-repetitive series of Forms.

The only method of avoiding such an inference would have lain in boldly extending the material principle both as a principle of individuation and imperfection to the intelligible world, and regarding the Ideas after the analogy of their particulars as fragments, or aspects, or mutilations of some higher unity behind them.

Both Plato and Aristotle, it is true, display a tendency in this direction in the arrangement of Ideas and Forms in hierarchies culminating in the one case in the Idea of the Good, in the other in the divine Mind. One step more and we should have had the sole and only perfection of the mystic vision divided and diminished, through every possible grade of imperfection, till the limit and minimum of being was reached. Though, even then, the sudden transition from the intelligible to the sensible level of existence would have broken the otherwise orderly diminution, and perplexing questions might have arisen whether sensible embodiments of superior Ideas were more or less perfect than the Ideas of inferior particulars.

But this mystic tendency is not carried out in either Plato or Aristotle. In both cases it is checked by a "naturalistic" inclination to regard Forms and Ideas as perfect after their kind, and not as mutilated aspects of the one perfection. The difference, then, could not be explained as the work of a distinctive principle of diminution and diversification, but had to be accepted as somehow involved in the nature of the ideal itself.

These difficulties, latent in the Platonic and Aristotelian systems, and only to be laid bare by reflection, are so clearly exposed in Plotinus that the most casual runner may read. The function of differentiation was denied to Matter (except inconsistently in the case of particulars other than human), not from any perception of the difficulties involved, but because such a denial was in line with his naturalistic trend of thought. Individuation from this point of view did not imply imperfection. Imperfection lay only in a particular kind of difference, the difference of a thing from its entelechy or ideal self. One kind of thing is not imperfect because it is not another, but because it is other than its true nature, the standard of which is fixed from all eternity in the intelligible world. It is as the ground of such difference that the Matter of sensible objects is the principle of imperfection. Its "otherness" is not the mark of an outward distinction, but of an inward formlessness. But difference proper, the difference of one kind of

thing from another, or in the case of human beings of one individual from another, is laid to the category of Difference.

But Plotinus could not keep these two kinds of difference apart even on the assumption of a pure naturalism. The doctrine of Matter as the principle of individuation of non-human particulars involved, as we know, a fatal self-contradiction. For the qualitative difference of particulars from one another implied a difference, on the part of one at least, from their proper form or type, and such difference implied imperfection. Yet why should it be worse for a horse to be a particular than for a man? Individuality in the latter case was justified and consecrated in the intelligible world. Why not in the former? Or, in other words, if the category of Difference accounts for my difference both from you and from my horse, and also for my horse's difference from you and from me, why should it not also account for my horse's difference from yours? Why involve another principle?

Plainly then, it would seem the logical thing that Plotinus should refer the variety of particulars to the category of Difference, rather than to Matter. Matter would be the substratum in which individual differences inhered; but this variety of particulars would reflect a similar variety in the intelligible order.

Yet it is only by not taking the obvious logical step that Plotinus is saved from a nominalism of the barest sort. With reference to the forms of partic-

ular men, we may well ask what their relation is to the form of man in general, and are at a loss for an intelligible answer. Are we to regard that relation as one of ordinary subsumption like the inclusion of species within a genus? It would seem so. Yet in that case Plotinus is condemned out of his own mouth. According to his own confession it is Form which is the principle of specific difference, intelligible Matter the common ground in which specific differences inhere. The universal man, then, man in general, is merely the intelligible *Matter* for the Ideas of particular men. The same will be true of the relation of any universal to its particulars. The particular, not the universal, will be the formal principle. The universal will be merely the subject of which the individual form is predicated. But this involves not only a complete reversion of the relation of universal to particular, but a practical annihilation of the universal. Each individual form is unique, and, *qua* a single unique form, is but once embodied. Inherence of such forms in a common substratum is impossible. The universal will be a mere name, accidentally and arbitrarily applied to several individuals. Metaphysical significance it will have none.

Furthermore, the outcome of such a nominalism must have been naturalism. We remember the Plotinian argument. Just as species cannot be expected to be each other, or to have identical perfections, so individuals within the same species

cannot be asked perfectly to embody the type. Particular men are not to be blamed for not attaining to the acme of human excellence. Did they attain to it, they would no longer be Tom, Dick, and Harry, but αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Their particular forms then are quite as perfect as the type-form.

But which is the principle of individuation in this case, the Idea of Difference, or Matter? Evidently the Idea, since here we are dealing with a distinction of one form from another, and intelligible Matter is the principle of community. But in that case the Idea of Difference becomes the principle upon which rest the differences of individuals from one another, and from their type or common entelechy. It usurps, in fine, the most "un-ideal" of all the functions of Matter.

Still it may be argued that this is to neglect particular forms, and their unique and proper perfections. May we not, one will ask, suppose an order of perfections, each unique and individual, differentiated from each other by the category, yet distinguished from their several particular embodiments, or, in other words, imperfectly expressed in the phenomenal world, because of Matter? But where am I to find my criterion for judging whether or not an individual is realizing its particular self except in its relation to its species? Am I a good John Smith except in so far as I am a good man? On the other hand, if I have an absolutely particular and unique function to perform, how can it be said

that I am not performing it whatever I may do? My function may well be to be what I am from moment to moment. Ideals, no less than Ideas, are the result of generalization.

But it is beside the point for us to re-open further an argument already sufficiently thrashed out. It is enough for us to have shown here that the individuation founded by Plotinus upon the category of Difference could not consistently have been held apart from that based by him upon Matter. To pursue this line of thought to its logical conclusion must have ended in a reference of all individuation to the category. All μή would have become ἕτερον. Nothing could fail of some one form of being except in so far as it perfectly embodied some other. Were I not this self, I should be that.

Thus Plotinus would have been brought face to face with the fundamental contradiction of his theodicy. The category of Difference must be responsible either for all evil and imperfection or for none. To choose one alternative led directly to mysticism, to choose the other led no less directly into naturalism. There was no *via media*.

But if regarded from one point of view the category of Difference was logically bound to take over from Matter just what made it the origin of Evil, from another point of view Matter was quite as bound to absorb the category. If in spite of the Plotinian distinction between them, we find the category covertly performing a function openly

charged to Matter, so do we equally find Matter really responsible for what is made explicitly the business of the category. It is Plotinus's intention, as we know, that none of the differences due to the category shall imply imperfection. All such shall be attributed to Matter. But now what does the category actually account for? It accounts not only for the individuation of Ideas within νοῦς and of souls and seminal reasons within the World-Soul, but also for the distinction of νοῦς from the One, and of ψυχή from νοῦς. Νοῦς and ψυχή are indeed described as possessed each of its appropriate excellence, and as in no wise to be blamed because they are not each other or not the One. Hence so far the category of Difference might be properly invoked as their principle of individuation. But at the same time, however much of a contradiction in terms it may be, the perfection of νοῦς is regarded as not so perfect as that of the One, and the excellence of ψυχή as not so excellent as that of νοῦς. In other and familiar words, kinds are also regarded as grades of perfection.

What is to account for the *graded* character of these perfections, that is, for the diminution in point of excellence, which one kind of perfection displays as compared with another? Νοῦς, though perfect in itself, is imperfect compared with the One. Ψυχή, though possessed of her proper excellence, is lacking in excellence as compared with νοῦς. How shall we explain this comparative imperfection? By

the category of Difference or by Matter? By Matter, is the logical answer.

Yet Plotinus's explanation, as far as he gives any, is implicitly to refer it to the category. There is no Evil in the supersensible world. Each hypostasis, as a whole and in its parts, is perfectly itself. We need then to seek no origin of Evil there, but only a principle of variety in the Good. But at the same time, the fatal comparison of goods in point of goodness is found there too. And this comparison could not but imply and rest upon a principle of imperfection.

Plotinus, doubtless, would have answered us with a reiteration of the proper perfections of νοῦς and ψυχή, and an assertion that the fact that one kind of perfection is not so perfect as another is quite different from the fact that a thing is not so perfect as its own nature entitles it to be. But the distinction cannot be maintained. To say that one kind of perfection is not so perfect as another signifies not only the innocent positive difference of the one from the other, but a certain lack in one or the other, or perhaps in both, of perfection in the abstract. A standard is covertly introduced by which the perfections compared are differentiated not only in point of kind, but of measure of excellence. So to compare them is, as we have already shown, really to "subsume" them under the standard set by the most perfect perfection, as particulars under a universal. As the particular more or less embodies

its entelechy, so the more or less perfect kind of perfection exemplifies to greater or less degree the standard value. That value is one. Just because it is a standard, it exists only in the highest degree. It may indeed be diffused throughout a variegated experience, and appears in many forms, distinguishable in every way save in the point of their perfection. But any distinction of one from another in that point is no longer a distinction of one kind of perfection from another, but of the imperfect from the perfect. It is only an imperfect object that can be not so perfect as a perfect object.

In short, to say that νοῦς is perfect after its kind, but not so perfect as the One, differs in no wise in significance from saying that I am not so perfect as human perfection. I lack in regard to the standard set by my entelechy in precisely the same way and on precisely the same level of meaning as my entelechy lacks with respect to the standard entelechy. I am not so perfect as a man might be; human excellence is not so perfect as perfection might be. The principle of explanation will be the same in both cases. If we are to invoke Matter to account for my failure to realize the proper measure of humanity, we should logically call it in to explain the failure of the excellence of νοῦς or ψυχή to realize the proper measure of perfection as such.

Moreover, we might turn the great Plotinian metaphor against its author and its purpose. We are to regard the emanation of reality from the

One under the figure of the light streaming forth from the sun and fading degree by degree into darkness. The darkness is Matter, the light Being and perfection. But where in such an analogy does the first degree of darkness and diminution occur? Surely, we must answer, with the very first escape of light from the sun. By virtue of what is it that νοῦς is not so perfect as the One, and that its light is diminished, if not by virtue of an admixture of darkness? Diminution of light is darkness. It is only by reason of its diminution that the light is distinguishable from its source, νοῦς from the One, ψυχή from νοῦς, the world from ψυχή. Matter thus becomes the principle of individuation of the three principal hypostases.

It follows that all that the category of Difference can account for is the variety of facts embodying any one degree of value; of Ideas, say, within νοῦς, or of souls and seminal reasons within the World-Soul. But even this function is largely curtailed. As in the world we distinguish one thing as higher or lower than another, not only in relation to its particular type, but by a comparison of its type with others, so there must be corresponding hierarchies of seminal reasons and Ideas. And for this graded structure within νοῦς and ψυχή the steady diminution of light ever dying away into the darkness will be the cause. The minor as well as the major differences in value will have to be attributed to Matter. But what will be left in that case for the category of

Difference? Nothing but the individuation of particular objects within a given species exemplifying the same degree of value—the one function, that is, which when approached from the other side was left to Matter and denied of the category. But even this cannot be saved from the usurpation of the material principle. We find that as before no final line can be drawn between kinds of individuation. Such particulars as share in one and the same Idea and perfection are individual only in so far as they are different from that type and perfection, *i.e.* in so far as they are imperfect. And Matter if it be nothing else is this principle of imperfection. Just as before, then, the category of Difference was logically forced to take over the individuating functions of Matter, so now Matter absorbs every function of the category of Difference. Instead of naturalism we have out-and-out mysticism.

So much for the internal inconsistencies of the Plotinian doctrine of Matter. There remains, however, the general question of the relation of this doctrine to the rest of his system. As the case now stands, his teaching would seem to be dualistic. Matter is placed over against the "spiritual" worlds as darkness against light, Not-being against Being. So diametrically opposed are the two principles that no *summum genus* can be found which shall contain them both. We might then at this point reasonably describe Plotinus as the greatest exponent of the Neo-Pythagorean δεύτερος λόγος. But, as we

know, to do this would be to ignore both base and apex of his system. "According to their ἀνωτάτω λόγος," says Eudorus in a passage quoted by Simplicius of which we have already taken note, "we must say that the Pythagoreans hold the One to be the principle of all things; according to a δεύτερος λόγος that they hold that there are two principles of created things, the One and the nature opposed to it."[1] Plotinus, for all his apparent adherence to the δεύτερος, as it has been just set forth, must be reckoned among the followers of the ἀνωτάτω λόγος. Of this attempt at an ultimate monism in which his theodicy culminates, it will be the business of the following and last chapter of our essay to treat.

[1] Simplicius, *Phys.* 181. 10. Cf. Diogenes viii. 24.

CHAPTER V

THE THEORY OF EMANATION

To describe the Plotinian effort to relate matter to, and deduce it from, the One must necessarily be in part little more than a review of what has already been said. We are already familiar with the outlines of the theory of emanation, and with something of the details of its working in the generation of Mind from the One, and of Soul from Mind. It remains for us to review them briefly, and then to pass on to an investigation of such last steps in the emanatory process as lie between Soul and Matter. The first part of our task, a review of what has already been considered, will perhaps be best accomplished by translating a portion of a short book in the fifth Ennead, entitled "Concerning the Generation of those things which come after the First,"[1] in which the implications and the first stages of emanation are summarized. The book begins, we may remember, with the statement "that the One is all things, and yet is none of them. For the source of all is not all, but all things belong to it inasmuch as all flow back, as it were, to it. Or rather,

[1] v. 2.

all things exist in it not as present, but as future. How then can they come forth from the One in its simplicity, since in the Same no variety makes its appearance, nor any duality of any kind? In this wise, I reply: Because nothing exists in the One, therefore all things proceed from it, and the One in order that they may exist, is itself not Being, but the generator of Being; and this generation of Being is the first creative act. For being perfect by virtue of seeking, having, and needing nothing, it overflows, as it were, and this overflow makes something other than it. And what has come into being turns back to the One and is filled by it, and looking towards it becomes Mind. And the steadfastness with which it stands turned towards the One produces Being, and its vision of the One produces Mind. Now since it stands turned toward the One in order that it may see, it becomes at once Mind and Being. So then, being like the One, it does as the One does, and pours forth its mighty power in its own form, just as what is prior to it poured its power forth. And this activity proceeding from essence is Soul, which comes into being without any change or movement in Mind, just as Mind came into being without any change or movement in the principle prior to it. But Soul does not remain at rest, but is herself in motion and generates an image of herself. By looking whence she was created, she is given completion, but by moving in a different and opposed direction she generates an image of herself, to wit, sense and vegetative nature. . . .

"There is then a procession from the first to the last, in which each thing is always left in its proper place, but in which the created ranks lower than the creator. Still each thing is the same as that which it follows, so long as it makes it the object of its pursuit. . . ."[1]

So much for emanation in general, and the procession of Mind from the One, and of Soul from Mind. We have now to carry that procession beyond Soul and show how it implies Matter at the end.

That the process of emanation should cease with the generation of Soul is as impossible in the

[1] 1. τὸ ἓν πάντα καὶ οὐδὲ ἓν· ἀρχὴ γὰρ πάντων οὐ πάντα, ἀλλ' ἐκείνης πάντα· ἐκεῖ γὰρ οἷον ἀνέδραμε· μᾶλλον δὲ οὔπω ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ἔσται. πῶς οὖν ἐξ ἁπλοῦ ἑνὸς οὐδεμιᾶς ἐν ταὐτῷ φαινομένης ποικιλίας, οὐ διπλόης ὀτουοῦν; ἢ ὅτι οὐδὲν ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ, διὰ τοῦτο ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντα, καὶ ἵνα τὸ ὂν ᾖ, διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸ οὐκ ὄν, γεννητὴς δὲ αὐτοῦ· καὶ πρώτη οἷον γέννησις αὕτη· ὂν γὰρ τέλειον τῷ μηδὲν ζητεῖν μηδὲ ἔχειν μηδὲ δεῖσθαι οἷον ὑπερερρύη καὶ τὸ ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο· τὸ δὲ γενόμενον εἰς αὐτὸ ἐπεστράφη καὶ ἐπληρώθη καὶ ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπον καὶ νοῦς οὕτως. καὶ ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο στάσις αὐτοῦ τὸ ὂν ἐποίησεν, ἡ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ θέα τὸν νοῦν. ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔστη πρὸς αὐτό, ἵνα ἴδῃ, ὁμοῦ νοῦς γίνεται καὶ ὄν. οὕτως οὖν ὢν οἷον ἐκεῖνος τὰ ὅμοια ποιεῖ δύναμιν προχέας πολλήν· εἶδος δὲ καὶ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ, ὥσπερ τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ πρότερον προέχει. καὶ αὕτη ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας ἐνέργεια ψυχὴ τοῦτο μένοντος ἐκείνου γενομένη· καὶ γὰρ ὁ νοῦς μένοντος τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο. ἡ δὲ οὐ μένουσα ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ κινηθεῖσα ἐγέννα εἴδωλον. ἐκεῖ μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα, ὅθεν ἐγένετο, πληροῦται, προελθοῦσα δὲ εἰς κίνησιν ἄλλην καὶ ἐναντίαν γεννᾷ εἴδωλον αὐτῆς αἴσθησιν καὶ φύσιν τὴν ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς. οὐδὲν δὲ τοῦ πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἀπήρηται οὐδ' ἀποτέτμηται. διὸ καὶ δοκεῖ καὶ ἡ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ μέχρι φυτῶν φθάνειν· τρόπον γάρ τινα φθάνει, ὅτι αὐτῆς τὸ ἐν φυτοῖς· οὐ μὴν πᾶσα ἐν φυτοῖς, ἀλλὰ γενομένη ἐν φυτοῖς οὕτως ἐστίν, ὅτι ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον προέβη εἰς τὸ κάτω ὑπόστασιν ἄλλην ποιησαμένη τῇ προόδῳ καὶ προθυμίᾳ τοῦ χείρονος· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ πρὸ τούτου τὸ νοῦ ἐξηρτημένον μένειν τὸν νοῦν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐᾷ. 2. πρόεισιν οὖν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς εἰς ἔσχατον καταλειπομένου ἀεὶ ἑκάστου ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ ἕδρᾳ, τοῦ δὲ γεννωμένου ἄλλην τάξιν λαμβάνοντος τὴν χείρονα· ἕκαστον μέντοι ταὐτὸν γίνεται ᾧ ἂν ἐπίσπηται, ἕως ἂν ἐφέπηται.

nature of things as that it should not take place at all. Just as the One must create, since creation is implied in its nature,[1] and as that creation once started could not stop at Mind (since then all possible kinds of being and grades of perfection would not have been exhausted which must exist if the higher grades exist),[2] so Soul must overflow into further forms of existence. She must display what she can produce, she must, like every other natural object, develop that of which she is capable, just as the seed unfolds its potentialities.[3]

Now "if there were no body, Soul could not go forth from herself, since there is no other place save body where it is natural for her to be. If then she is to go forth from herself, she will create for herself a place, and hence body. And though her immobility is made fast, as it were, by the category of Rest itself, she is like a great light which in shining forth finally becomes darkness at the outmost extremities to which its fires reach."[4]

But this power of emanation and production "is not to be stopped and circumscribed by jealousy, but must ever proceed until the universe has come

[1] iv. 8, § 6 (474 A) [vol. ii. p. 149, l. 32 *et seq.*].

[2] iv. 8, § 3 (472 A) [vol. ii. p. 147, l. 2 *et seq.*].

[3] iv. 8, § 6 (474 A–B) [vol. ii. p. 149, l. 32 *et seq.*].

[4] iv. 3, § 9 (379 A) [vol. ii. p. 20, l. 27 *et seq.*]. *σώματος μὲν μὴ ὄντος οὐδ' ἂν προέλθοι ψυχή, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ τόπος ἄλλος ἔστιν, ὅπου πέφυκεν εἶναι. προιέναι δὲ εἰ μέλλοι, γεννήσει ἑαυτῇ τόπον, ὥστε καὶ σῶμα. τῆς δὴ στάσεως αὐτῆς ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ στάσει οἱονεὶ ῥωννυμένης οἷον πολὺ φῶς ἐκλάμψαν ἐπ' ἄκροις τοῖς ἐσχάτοις τοῦ πυρὸς σκότος ἐγίγνετο.*

to the end of the possibilities of being. This is due to the inexhaustible power of the One, which gives of itself to all things and cannot suffer anything to be without a share of itself. For there is nothing to prevent anything from sharing in the nature of the Good, as far as it is able to comprehend it. If then the nature of Matter has always existed, it is impossible that as something existent, it should not participate in that which gives of its largess of good to all things as far as each is able to receive it. But if the generation of Matter has followed by necessity from causes prior to it, not even thus can it be separated from the Good through any inability to come to it sooner on the part of that which has, after all, given it being out of mere generosity."[1]

Finally we may return to the passage where Plotinus discusses the meaning of Plato's statement in the *Theaetetus* that evil is necessarily involved in good. "The necessity of Evil," he says, "is to be understood thus. Since the Good is not alone, there must come through the procession from it, or, if one prefers, through the continual descent and departure from it, that which is last and after which it is not

[1] iv. 8, § 6 (474 B) [vol. ii. p. 150, l. 13 *et seq.*]. ἦν οὐκ ἔδει στῆσαι οἷον περεγράψαντα φθόνῳ, χωρεῖν δὲ ἀεί, ἕως εἰς ἔσχατον μέχρι τοῦ δυνατοῦ τὰ πάντα ἥκῃ αἰτίᾳ δυνάμεως ἁπλέτου ἐπὶ πάντα παρ' αὐτῆς πεμπούσης, καὶ οὐδὲν περιΐδεῖν ἄμοιρον αὐτῆς δυναμένης. οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἦν ὃ ἐκώλυεν ὁτιοῦν ἔμμοιρον εἶναι φύσεως ἀγαθοῦ, καθ' ὅσον ἕκαστον οἷόν τε ἦν μεταλαμβάνειν. εἶτ' οὖν ἦν ἀεὶ ἡ τῆς ὕλης φύσις, οὐχ οἷόν τε ἦν αὐτὴν μὴ μετασχεῖν οὖσαν τοῦ πᾶσι τὸ ἀγαθὸν καθ' ὅσον δύναται ἕκαστον χορηγοῦντος· εἶτ' ἐπηκολούθησεν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἡ γένεσις αὐτῆς τοῖς πρὸ αὐτῆς αἰτίοις, οὐδ' ὡς ἔδει χωρὶς εἶναι, ἀδυναμίᾳ πρὶν εἰς αὐτὴν ἐλθεῖν στάντος τοῦ καὶ τὸ εἶναι οἷον ἐν χάριτι δόντος.

possible that anything more should come into being. This is Evil. What comes after the first exists of necessity; therefore the last also exists of necessity. This is Matter which has nothing more of the first in it. Such is the necessity of Evil."[1]

After Soul in the order of emanation comes the material universe. This, as we know, may be regarded as a perfect whole in which each part occupies its appropriate place. But at the same time these parts may be arranged in a hierarchy according as they are higher or lower, and possess a greater or less degree of being. Within the universe we may descend step by step from the highest and most highly complicated forms of organic, to the simplest and least specialized forms of inorganic existence. In the most amorphous forms of such existence we reach the least specific terms in which reason can define Being, the point where at length Being lapses into Not-being, and the last glimmer of light goes out in darkness.

The mechanism of the emanation of the world from Soul may be briefly passed over. Since Soul is intermediate in the process of development, she must reproduce, as well as preserve, herself. She must overflow, display her powers, realize her capacities. These capacities are not realized in

[1] i. 8, § 7 (77 E) [vol. i. p. 107, l. 19 *et seq.*]. *ἔστι δὲ τοῦ κακοῦ λαβεῖν καὶ οὕτω τὴν ἀνάγκην. ἐπεὶ γὰρ οὐ μόνον τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀνάγκη τῇ ἐκβάσει τῇ παρ' αὐτοῦ, ἤ, εἰ οὕτω τις ἐθέλοι λέγειν, τῇ ἀεὶ ὑποβάσει καὶ ἀποστάσει, τὸ ἔσχατον, καὶ μεθ' ὃ οὐκ ἦν ἔτι γενέσθαι ὁτιοῦν, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ κακόν. ἐξ ἀνάγκης δὲ εἶναι τὸ μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον, ὥστε καὶ τὸ ἔσχατον· τοῦτο δὲ ἡ ὕλη μηδὲν ἔτι ἔχουσα αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ἀνάγκη τοῦ κακοῦ.*

thought alone, for in that case she would be indistinguishable from Mind. She has sensitive and vegetative powers as well; witness the existence of sense, life, and inorganic Nature. It is these powers that actualize themselves in the phenomenal universe.

We are now in a position to understand the character of Plotinus's attempt at a monistic explanation of the material principle. It has, it seems, two fairly distinct aspects. In the first place there is an endeavour to show how any emanative process must, by the logical necessities of its own nature, involve "material" features (I use the adjective in the Plotinian metaphysical sense). To emanate is to go forth, and going forth implies a departure and separation from its source of what overflows. By virtue of this separation we are able to distinguish what is generated from its generator, and to predicate of it difference from its source. Otherwise the overflow would be indiscernible as such. The light, for example, which the sun gives out would be indistinguishable from the sun itself. In that case we could not properly speak of an overflow, or emanation, or radiation at all. Being would not stream from a source, but would be like a lake without tributary or outlet, and ever at the same level. In other words, all individuation would take place within the One and nothing could be distinguished from it, just as in Spinoza's system everything is a mode of the one divine substance, and outside God nothing can exist or be conceived.

Emanation then involves a departure and an extrinsic differentiation of what is generated from its generator. But to depart from the absolute Good, the standard of perfection and fulness of reality, is not only to become a different kind, but a lesser degree of perfection. What proceeds is by reason of its procession different in being from the fulness of Being, and in good from the highest Good. To exemplify his point Plotinus had but to appeal to concrete facts. The perfume is fainter the farther it gets from the sweet-smelling object, the light fades in proportion as it proceeds farther from its source. In fine, departure from an absolute standard means diminution with respect to that standard.

Thus it seemed to Plotinus that he had shown that a "material" principle is implied in the very nature of the emanative process *qua* emanative, and that procession or creation of a logical necessity involves imperfection. At the same time the passages we have been considering appear to teach a substantial derivation of Matter from the One. Matter is τὸ ἔσχατον in a chain of which the One is τὸ πρῶτον, and in which each link is derived from and dependent upon its antecedent. Just as the One overflows into Mind and Mind into Soul and Soul into the world, so the lowest powers of Soul in their final exhaustion pass over into blank nothingness, or, in other words, beget or produce it. The last glimmer of light, we might say, by its extinction gives rise to darkness.

Indeed, in one way the production of Matter, or what is to all intents and purposes Matter, may be said to begin with the emanation of Mind from the One. Mind by its separation and individuation from the One is thereby diminished in perfection as compared with the One. The One as the source of Mind *qua* Mind is the reason for Mind's difference from it, and diminution with respect to it. Mind then and the material principle issue twin-like from the One. If it be objected that the diminution of Mind is due to Matter and the fading of the light to darkness, the reply is ready that it is equally correct to say that Matter is due to the diminution of Mind, darkness to the fading of the light. The truth is, we might add, that neither can be described as due to, or caused by, the other. They are merely different definitions of one and the same fact.

Matter then, though a co-eternal principle with the One (since the procession of the world is from eternity), is not co-absolute. The One might exist without Matter, but Matter could not exist apart from the One. It is involved in and dependent upon that process of emanation of which the One is the source. It owes its being to the One. Were there no light there could be no darkness, were there no Being there could be no Not-being. For darkness has no meaning or no existence in fact, save in relation to the light an absence of which it signifies. And Not-being is meaningless apart from the Being of which it is the extinction. It is a relative, not an absolute term.

The question of the success of this attempt at a monistic deduction of the imperfect from the perfect may be postponed for the present. But whatever we may think of its intrinsic self-consistency, it could not but raise again many problems of vital bearing upon the interests of a theodicy. It must, for example, bring up the whole point at issue with the Gnostics. Must not such a process as we have described be regarded as a process of degeneration? Does not the emanation of Soul from Mind and of the world from Soul necessarily imply a fall on the part of the hypostasis in question? What is Soul, in a word, but a rather more quietly dressed, yet none the less fallen sister of Sophia Achamoth?

These difficulties which we noted in treating of Plotinus's attack upon the Gnostics, and promised later to take under consideration, we may regard as more or less answered in the course of the intervening discussion. We know by what means, and at what expense of logic, Plotinus avoided the main issue. He shifted his weight, if one may use the expression, from the mystic to the naturalistic foot. Mind, Soul, universe—each had its proper perfection to which it perfectly attained, and was not to be blamed or regarded as degenerate because its particular perfection was less perfect than that of its predecessors. Together with this insistence upon different kinds of perfection, was a conception of the Good as active and expansive in its nature, overflowing from its superabundance, and filling all possibilities of being.

Such an emanation involved neither diminution nor degeneration. The sun is not spent in sending forth its light and heat, nor is the rose less sweet for the perfume it spreads about it. Moreover, no one degree of heat or light or sweetness is diminished, or deteriorated, or changed in its particular measure by reason of the next lower degree immediately following it. Since each step, then, in the process gives rise to the next without in any way detracting from the proper fulness of its being, the process involves no intrinsic deterioration. No essence is corrupted, no degree of perfection as such is degraded into a lower. From this point of view, however difficult it may be to reconcile it with the other, emanation is not a fall.

In the same way since the operation involved no change or decrease in the creator, the act of creation could be regarded as essential, not accidental. It is the nature of the One to overflow into Mind, of Mind to overflow into Soul. And it is likewise essential to Soul to create the world, not accidental, as in the case of Sophia Achamoth. She would not be so good as she is, would not occupy the place she does, would not be herself, were there not possibilities of perfection beyond her to be realized. With her as with the One, creation is a sign of superabundance of perfection, not a desertion of her proper function and a symptom of disease.

Still there were difficulties yet to be faced. Moral evil remained inexplicable. For its occur-

rence there was no precedent, for its explanation no solution in the nature of the emanative process. There was no "fall" involved in the procession of Mind from the One, of Soul from Mind, or yet of the universe from Soul. The World-Soul gave forth the physical world with the same ease with which Mind produced the World-Soul. Nor was there anything in the universe thus given forth that could bring shame upon her or contaminate her with its contact and dependence. The world as we have already seen is a perfect world. There is not a shade of the fading light which gives existence to its manifold being that is not so bright as in the nature of things it can be. It causes the World-Soul no difficulty; it in no way interferes with and hinders her in the exercise of her proper functions. While pouring it forth from the superfluity of her own perfection she maintains that perfection at its due level, and remains steadfastly turned towards Mind for her interest and inspiration. We might indeed liken her creative act to the performance of a master-pianist who, with never a glance at the keys and with eyes fixed upon his notes, plays a world-symphony with faultless technique.[1] In short, her generation of the world is an act of the same class as her generation by Mind.

But the relation of the individual soul to the particular body is different. She is, to carry on

[1] Cf. the simile of Numenius of the pilot who keeps his eyes fixed upon the stars. Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* xi. ch. 18, quoted by Vacherot, *op. cit.* i. p. 323.

our figure, a bungling performer. The keys worry and obstruct her fingers, distract her attention, involve her in blunders in reading and interpretation. Instead of governing the body from above, as it were, making it the instrument of her will and the vehicle of her perfection and powers, she is governed by it, dragged down and subjected to it, and its passions. She errs and she sins.

But how are we to find any place for this phenomenon of sin in the emanative process? Why should the particular soul be corrupted by her descent into a particular body, any more than the World-Soul by her descent into the body of the universe? Or better still, since Plotinus insists that the body is rather in the soul than the soul in the body, and the World-Soul is said to govern the world from above, why should the particular soul's generation of a particular body involve her in relations with it which may be described as a descent into it? Why, in short, in the case of the particular soul is creation a fall? Is this fall a necessary incident in the process of emanation? If so, what becomes of moral responsibility? If not, what becomes of the law and order of the world? The antithesis of freedom and determinism with all its difficulties, again confronts Plotinus.

His answer is confused and contradictory. It is hard to give even a coherent account of it. But we may make an attempt as follows :—

The relation of the World-Soul to the physical world in no wise detracts from the former's perfection.

We may therefore conclude that mere possession of a body does not contaminate any soul. Contamination enters through some further relation or attitude of the soul towards the body. Indeed the mere possession of a body is a part and a display of the perfection of the soul. "Although the soul is divine in essence, and is from above, she enters the body, and although a lesser divinity she comes hither by a voluntary inclination and by reason of her power, and for the purpose of adorning what is lower than she. If she flies quickly back, she incurs no blame in getting knowledge of evil and knowing the nature of vice, in displaying her powers, and showing forth her works and deeds, which, had they remained in the incorporeal world, would have been without fruit and never have attained actuality, and the soul would have been ignorant of her possessions, had they not been displayed and had they not gone forth from her—assuming, that is, that in all cases activity is an index of power—and would be entirely hidden and, as it were, unseen and without being, at any rate without real being. . . ." [1]

[1] iv. 8, § 5 (473 D) [vol. ii. p. 149, l. 16 *et seq.*]. οὕτω τοι καίπερ οὖσα θεῖον καὶ ἐκ τῶν τόπων τῶν ἄνω, ἐντὸς γίγνεται τοῦ σώματος. καὶ θεὸς οὖσα ὁ ὕστερος, ῥοπῇ αὐτεξουσίῳ καὶ αἰτίᾳ δυνάμεως, καὶ τοῦ μετ' αὐτὴν κοσμήσει ὡσὶ ἔρχεται, κἂν μὲν θᾶττον φύγῃ, οὐδὲν βέβλαπται, γνῶσιν κακοῦ προσλαβοῦσα, καὶ φύσιν κακίας γνοῦσα, τάς τε δυνάμεις ἄγουσα αὐτῆς εἰς τὸ φανερόν, καὶ δείξασα ἔργα τε καὶ ποιήσεις, ἃ ἐν τῷ ἀσωμάτῳ ἠρεμοῦντα μάτην τε ἂν ἦν, εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ἀεὶ οὐκ ἰόντα, τήν τε ψυχὴν αὐτὴν ἔλαθεν ἂν ἃ εἶχεν, οὐκ ἐκφανέντα, οὐδὲ πρόοδον λαβόντα, εἴπερ πανταχοῦ ἡ ἐνέργεια τὴν δύναμιν ἔδειξε, κρυφθεῖσαν ἂν ἀπάντῃ, καὶ οἷον ἀφανισθεῖσαν, καὶ οὐκ οὖσαν, μηδέποτε ὄντως οὖσαν.

Plotinus will not deny that her connection with the body may be an advantage, even though it involve her in evil, provided only she reform. Like the Platonic judge she should know evil without experiencing it, and yet "the knowledge of the good is the clearer for experience of evil in the case of those whose power is too weak to understand evil without previously making trial of it."[1]

What, now, is the nature of that particular connection of the body which involves the soul in evil? "There are two reasons why the connection of the soul with the body is blamed: first, because it impedes thought; second, because it fills her with pleasures and desires and pains."[2] But under what circumstances and in what kind of relation to the body are obscuration of thought and susceptibility to the passions present?

So far the line of argument which we have been pursuing belongs to what we have called the naturalistic tendency in Plotinus's thought. Bodily life seems to be regarded as not involving *a priori* a fall of the soul, but rather as an exhibition of her possibilities. In his answer, however, to the above question there appears to be a *volte-face* to mysticism. At any rate Plotinus's explanation of the nature of the fall is

[1] iv. 8, § 7 (475 c) [vol. ii. p. 151, l. 17 *et seq.*]. *γνῶσις γὰρ ἐναργεστέρα τἀγαθοῦ ἡ τοῦ κακοῦ πεῖρα οἷς ἡ δύναμις ἀσθενεστέρα, ἢ ὥστε ἐπιστήμῃ τὸ κακὸν πρὸ πείρας γνῶναι.*

[2] iv. 8, § 2 (471 A) [vol. i. p. 145, l. 17 *et seq.*]. *δύο γὰρ ὄντων, δι' ἃ δυσχεραίνεται ἡ ψυχῆς πρὸς σώματα κοινωνία, ὅτι τε ἐμπόδιον πρὸς τὰς νοήσεις γίγνεται, καὶ ὅτι ἡδονῶν καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ λυπῶν πίμπλησιν αὐτήν.*

apparently not an explanation of how the soul enters into wrong relations with the body, but of how she enters into the body at all. He may be speaking in part metaphorically, it is true. Still the general sense of his answer is that incarnation is the result of a fault, not of a perfection on the part of the soul.[1]

"What is it that has made souls forget God their father, from whom they derive their being, and to whom they wholly belong, so that they know neither themselves nor him? For them I answer, the origin of evil lay in audacity, and generation, and primal difference from him, and the desire to belong to themselves. Since they openly delighted in their free will and began to exercise their own manifold self-originated activities, so having run a course opposed to the divine will and strayed very far from God they forgot that they came from him; just as children early removed from their father and brought up in a distant land for many years, forget who they themselves and their fathers are. Thus, having no vision, either of God or of their own selves, the souls had no reverence for themselves—for they knew not their lineage—and honoured other things, marvelling at everything rather than at themselves; and being struck by the outer world and holding it in high esteem, they became dependent upon it. Thus they severed themselves as far as they might from the divine from which they had turned in scorn. Esteem, then, of earthly things, and scorn

[1] iv. 8, § 5 (473 c) [vol. ii. p. 149, l. 7].

of their true selves, is the cause of their complete ignorance of God."[1]

Plotinus's meaning is clearly set forth in another passage as follows:—"Particular souls who exercise their natural inclination towards the intelligible and turn back to their source and at the same time govern what is lower than they, are like the light which, depending from the sun above, still does not grudge to spend itself upon the earth which lies beneath. Such souls must be unharmed by earth and remain with the World-Soul in the intelligible world, and united to her in heaven and sharing her rule. Even so kings rule conjointly with the King of all without descending from their royal thrones, and are of the same rank with him. But when souls pass from a universal to a particular and independent existence, and weary, as it were, of being conjoined with others, each reverts to her own individual life. So, when a soul has led her own life for some time and for-

[1] v. 1, § 1 (beginning, *et seq.*) (481–482). 1. *τί ποτε ἄρα ἐστὶ τὸ πεποιηκὸς τὰς ψυχὰς πατρὸς θεοῦ ἐπιλαθέσθαι, καὶ μοίρας ἐκεῖθεν οὔσας καὶ ὅλως ἐκείνου ἀγνοῆσαι καὶ ἑαυτὰς καὶ ἐκεῖνον; ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν αὐταῖς τοῦ κακοῦ ἡ τόλμα καὶ ἡ γένεσις καὶ ἡ πρώτη ἑτερότης καὶ τὸ βουληθῆναι δὲ ἑαυτῶν εἶναι. τῷ δὴ αὐτεξουσίῳ ἐπειδήπερ ἐφάνησαν ἡσθεῖσαι πολλῷ τῷ κινεῖσθαι παρ' αὑτῶν κεχρημέναι, τὴν ἐναντίαν δραμοῦσαι καὶ πλείστην ἀπόστασιν πεποιημέναι ἠγνόησαν καὶ ἑαυτὰς ἐκεῖθεν εἶναι· ὥσπερ παῖδες εὐθὺς ἀποσπασθέντες ἀπὸ πατέρων καὶ πολὺν χρόνον πόρρω τραφέντες ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ ἑαυτοὺς καὶ πατέρας. οὔτ' οὖν ἔτι ἐκεῖνον οὔτε ἑαυτὰς ὁρῶσαι, ἀτιμάσασαι ἑαυτὰς ἀγνοίᾳ τοῦ γένους, τιμήσασαι τἄλλα καὶ πάντα μᾶλλον ἢ ἑαυτὰς θαυμάσασαι καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ ἐκπλαγεῖσαι καὶ ἀγασθεῖσαι καὶ ἐξηρτημέναι τούτων ἀπέρρηξαν ὡς οἷόν τε ἑαυτὰς ὂν ἀπεστράφησαν ἀτιμάσασαι· ὥστε συμβαίνει τῆς παντελοῦς ἀγνοίας ἐκείνου ἡ τῶνδε τιμὴ καὶ ἡ ἑαυτῶν ἀτιμία εἶναι αἰτία.*

saken the universal mode of existence, and distinguished and separated herself from the World-Soul, having no longer the vision of the intelligible, she becomes herself a part, and is alone and weak, and busy with many things, and looks to the part rather than to the whole; and by her separation from the whole she falls into some one individual and forsakes all else but him, and goes and turns to him, who is but a part at the mercy of all things and everything. Thus she separates herself from the whole and is burdened with the governance of an individual part, and attaches herself to it, and cares for external things, being not only present but deep sunk in them. Thus we can properly say that she has lost her wings and is imprisoned in the body, since she has erred from her blameless existence—a life of governing the higher world in common with the World-Soul. And indeed it were altogether better she should return to her former state. But as it is, the soul is captive and fallen and fettered, and works through the senses because of this initial obstacle to the use of the intellect. In this plight she is said to be buried, to be in a cave. But by turning towards thought she is said to be loosed from her bonds, and to rise, when she begins by virtue of her recollection to gaze upon real existences. For in spite of her fall, she preserves ever something of the higher world within her."[1]

[1] iv. 8, § 4 (472 A) [vol. ii. p. 147, l. 6 *et seq.*]. 4. τὰς δὴ καθέκαστα ψυχὰς ὁρέξει μὲν νοερᾷ χρωμένας ἐν τῇ ἐξ οὗ ἐγένοντο πρὸς αὐτὸ

We may, however, pass over the seeming inconsistency of this passage with those which regard the soul's descent into the body as a natural display of her perfections and powers. The contradiction is, after all, but another instance of the fundamental inconsistency of the Plotinian system. Moreover, it seems to be metaphorically as well as literally meant; and it answers our question as to the nature of the soul's fall. Whether her union with a particular body be in itself a sign of decadence or of superabundant good, whether the fall occurs before or after her entrance into corporeal life, we are now in a position to say in what that fall consists. It

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ἐπιστροφῇ, δύναμιν δὲ καὶ εἰς τὸ ἐπὶ τάδε ἐχούσας, οἷά περ φῶς ἐξηρτημένον μὲν κατὰ τὰ ἄνω ἡλίου, τῷ δὲ μετ' αὐτὸ οὐ φθονοῦν τῆς χορηγίας, ἀπήμονας μὲν εἶναι [δεῖ] μετὰ τῆς ὅλης μενούσας ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, ἐν οὐρανῷ δὲ μετὰ τῆς ὅλης συνδιοικεῖν ἐκείνῃ, οἷα οἱ βασιλεῖς τῷ πάντων κρατοῦντι συνόντες συνδιοικοῦσιν ἐκείνῳ οὐ καταβαίνοντες οὐδ' αὐτοὶ ἀπὸ τῶν βασιλείων τόπων· καὶ γάρ εἰσιν ὁμοῦ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τότε. μεταβάλλουσαι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ὅλου εἰς τὸ μέρος τε εἶναι καὶ ἑαυτῶν καὶ οἷον κάμνουσαι τῷ σὺν ἄλλῳ εἶναι ἀναχωροῦσιν εἰς τὸ αὑτῶν ἑκάστη. ὅταν δὴ τοῦτο διὰ χρόνων ποιῇ φεύγουσα τὸ πᾶν καὶ τῇ διακρίσει ἀποστᾶσα καὶ μὴ πρὸς τὸ νοητὸν βλέπῃ, μέρος γενομένη μονοῦταί τε καὶ ἀσθενεῖ καὶ πολυπραγμονεῖ καὶ πρὸς μέρος βλέπει καὶ τῷ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὅλου χωρισμῷ ἑνός τινος ἐπιβᾶσα καὶ τὸ ἄλλο πᾶν φυγοῦσα, ἐλθοῦσα καὶ στραφεῖσα εἰς τὸ ἓν ἐκεῖνο πληττόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν ὅλων καὶ πάντων τοῦ τε ὅλου ἀπέστη, καὶ τὸ καθέκαστον μετὰ περιστάσεως διοικεῖ ἐφαπτομένη ἤδη καὶ θεραπεύουσα τὰ ἔξωθεν καὶ παροῦσα καὶ δῦσα αὐτοῦ πολὺ εἰς τὸ εἴσω. ἔνθα καὶ συμβαίνει αὐτῇ τὸ λεγόμενον πτερορρυῆσαι καὶ ἐν δεσμοῖς, τοῖς τοῦ σώματος γενέσθαι ἁμαρτούδῃ τοῦ ἀβλαβοῦς τοῦ ἐν τῇ διοικήσει τοῦ κρείττονος, ὃ ἦν παρὰ τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ ὅλῃ· τὸ δὲ πρὸ τοῦ ἦν παντελῶς ἄμεινον ἀναδραμούσῃ· εἰληπται οὖν πεσοῦσα καὶ πρὸς τῷ δεσμῷ οὖσα καὶ τῇ αἰσθήσει ἐνεργοῦσα διὰ τὸ κωλύεσθαι τῷ νῷ ἐνεργεῖν καταρχάς, τεθάφθαι τε λέγεται καὶ ἐν σπηλαίῳ εἶναι, ἐπιστραφεῖσα δὲ πρὸς νόησιν λύεσθαί τε ἐκ τῶν δεσμῶν καὶ ἀναβαίνειν, ὅταν ἀρχὴν λάβῃ ἐξ ἀναμνήσεως θεᾶσθαι τὰ ὄντα. ἔχει γὰρ ἀεὶ οὐδὲν ἧττον ὑπερέχον τι.

consists in an attitude of the soul towards bodily life. It consists in forsaking the intellectual vision of the whole which she shares with the World-Soul, as a part thereof, and in allowing her particular part of the whole to engage her attention and interest. By virtue of her union with the body one might say she is endowed with two eyes, not one: the eye of reason, a heritage from Mind, and the eye of sense; the bird's-eye that sees the universe spread beneath it in its totality, *sub specie aeternitatis*, and the eye that looks away on a level before it, passing discursively from one part to another, and never grasping all the parts synoptically. So long as she keeps the second eye shut, or at any rate so long as she subordinates and subsumes what she sees with it beneath the intellectual vision of the other, all is well with her. But if she allow its sights to interest and attract her, to draw her from the rational point of view and to blur it, she becomes immersed in sense, subject to the solicitations of the passions, sees things only in part and temporal sequence, and loses the intellectual vision of the whole. To revert to our figure of the musician, the particular soul looks to her fingers instead of her notes. While she looks steadfastly at the notes, she plays perfectly. Her fingers will take care of themselves if only she will let them. But if she looks to them, she loses her place, becomes confused, bungles her piece. Her fall, then, consists in attending to the keys instead of to the score, to the part instead of the whole.

But this does not answer the crucial question. The important point is whether the diversion of her attention from whole to part is implicated in the process of emanation, or is an act of free will.

Plotinus denies the dilemma. He will solve the difficulty by choosing both alternatives. They do not exclude one another, but are compatible. The fall of the soul is both free and determined. The particular soul must indeed send forth from herself a particular body by virtue of that same necessity which causes the emanation of the physical world from the World-Soul. It is an eternal law of nature that she should descend into the body.[1] At the same time she is determined to this descent by nothing save her own nature. She does not indeed choose whether or no she will descend. She finds descent the proper expression of her nature, and thus her voluntary and free act. She descends, says Plotinus, "as by a natural impulse, like that which moves one towards marriage or noble deeds, and not moved by logical reflection."[2]

Indeed, we have here an instance of that complete accord between freedom and necessity in which all practical distinction between the terms vanishes. The soul's creation of, or descent into, the body is like the act of the spirit in Paradise. If you say to her, "You cannot act otherwise," she will reply,

[1] iv. 8, § 5 (473 B) [vol. ii. p. 149, l. 1 *et seq.*].

[2] iv. 3, § 13 (382 E) [vol. ii. p. 26, l. 15 *et seq.*]. ἴασι δὲ οὔτε ἑκοῦσαι οὔτε πεμφθεῖσαι, οὗ γε τὸ ἑκούσιον τοιοῦτον ὡς προελέσθαι, ἀλλὰ ὡς τὸ πηδᾶν κατὰ φύσιν, ἢ πρὸς γάμων φυσικὰς προθυμίας, ἢ πρὸς πράξεις τινὲς καλῶν οὐ λογισμῷ κινούμεναι.

"I do not will otherwise." Her act, as Plotinus himself remarks, may also be said to be neither free nor determined.[1]

In this coincidence of freedom and necessity Plotinus apparently believes that he has found a clue to the solution of the difficulty. In a similar manner that diversion of the attention from the whole to the part, in which the soul's descent into the body and her sin consist, might be regarded as both necessitated by the nature of the emanative process, and at the same time a free act for which the soul is responsible. In this way moral evil could be fitted into and inter-connected with the world-process, and yet not attributed to it.

"There is," Plotinus argues, "no inconsistency in speaking as Plato does both of a 'sowing' into the process of generation [2] and of a descent for the purpose of perfecting the all,[3] and of just punishment [4] and the cave,[5] and both of freedom and of necessity [6] (since necessity in truth includes freedom), and of the soul being in evil while in the body.[7] Nor is there any contradiction . . . in the doctrine of Empedocles of a flight from God and a wandering, or of sin upon which punishment comes, nor in the teaching of Heracleitus of a rest in flight, nor generally in the idea that the descent is both

[1] iv. 3, § 13 (382 E) [vol. ii. p. 26, l. 13 *et seq.*].
[2] *Timaeus*, 71 E, 72 D.
[3] *Timaeus*, 30.
[4] *Phaedrus*, 247.
[5] *Rep.* vii. 514.
[6] *Timaeus*, 47 D–48 A.
[7] *Phaedrus*, 246 ; *Phaedo*, 62.

voluntary and involuntary. For everything that degenerates does so involuntarily. Yet since it degenerates of its own proper motion, the inferiority which results is said to be punishment for the act." [1]

The fallacy in the argument must be obvious, also the confusion of the naturalistic and the mystic points of view upon which it rests. Granted, as we may be quite willing to do, that the procession of the body from the soul, or, if one prefer, the descent of the soul into the body, may be described without contradiction as both free and determined, or as neither, such an admission is only possible on the assumption that the procession or descent involves no fall into sin or imperfection, unless in truth the whole purpose of our theodicy is to be stultified. The soul, in obedience to the law of emanation, *must* send forth a physical body from herself; at the same time, freely, (that is, under no outer compulsion) but as the expression of her proper nature and purpose she *wills* to send it forth. But if that emanation be a fall, then either she *must* fall, or she falls of her own free will. If she must fall there is no moral responsibility. Not she, but the emanative process,

[1] iv. 8, § 5 (473) [vol. ii. p. 148, l. 22 *et seq.*]. 5. *οὐ τοίνυν διαφωνεῖ ἀλλήλοις ἥ τε εἰς γένεσιν σπορὰ ἥ τε εἰς τελείωσιν κάθοδος τοῦ παντός, ἥ τε δίκη τό τε σπήλαιον, ἥ τε ἀνάγκη τό τε ἑκούσιον, ἐπείπερ ἔχει τὸ ἑκούσιον ἡ ἀνάγκη, καὶ τὸ ἐν κακῷ τῷ σώματι εἶναι· οὐδ' ἡ Ἐμπεδοκλέους φυγὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πλάνη οὐδ' ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἐφ' ᾗ ἡ δίκη, οὐδ' ἡ Ἡρακλείτου ἀνάπαυλα ἐν τῇ φυγῇ, οὐδ' ὅλως τὸ ἑκούσιον τῆς καθόδου καὶ τὸ ἀκούσιον αὖ. πᾶν μὲν γὰρ ἰὸν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ἀκούσιον, φορᾷ γε μὴν οἰκείᾳ ἰὸν πάσχον τὰ χείρω ἔχειν λέγεται τὴν ἐφ' οἷς ἔπραξε δίκην.*

and ultimately either God or Matter, is to blame. On the other hand, if she fall of her own free will, all the old difficulties recur. Freedom is self-determination. But the soul can only determine herself to the good. Because of her proper perfection she of herself cannot attend to, or interest herself in, anything but the universal and the intelligible. Neither the necessity, then, that governs the process of emanation, *i.e.* the necessity that perfection shall overflow, nor the freedom of self-legislation, can explain a descent into the body which is a fall and a fault. We are in a cul-de-sac.

But Plotinus, it seems, looked at the matter with both the naturalistic and the mystic eye wide open. The act whereby the soul created or descended into the body could be described as both necessary and free. The naturalistic eye told him that this descent need of itself involve no fall or sin, but only the display of a new kind or degree of perfection. The mystic eye on the other hand assured him that it did involve a fall and a deterioration. With one eye he saw a descent of the soul for the purpose of perfecting the whole, sent by God to enlighten and give being to what was beneath her, maintaining in her downward flight the Heracleitean *ἀνάπαυλα*; with the other, the soul descending to expiate her fault of separation, fleeing and wandering far from God, plunged in evil while in the body. And since the descent might be regarded as both determined and free, Plotinus could invoke its necessity *ad majorem*

Dei gloriam, to show that the One, though there be many stages between, is still the cause of the soul's descent, so far as it is necessitated by, and displays the superabundance of, the soul's perfection; its freedom also *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, to show how the One is not responsible for her descent so far as it implies fault and fall. Some such confusion of the meaning and application of terms is probably responsible for the contradiction.

Plotinus then is satisfied with his attempt to derive the existence of Matter from the One without making the One responsible for its value. He believes, in a word, that he has achieved an ethical monism. What are we to say to his claim?

We must deny it, I think, and hold that he has not made good his point. Apart from his particular failure to explain how the descent of the soul into the body can be regarded as both innocent and guilty, determined and free, and how the fact of sin can be viewed as part and product of a world-order, which is still neither responsible for nor contaminated by its value, his whole method of deducing the imperfect from the perfect is open to suspicion. We cannot but doubt the success both of his endeavour to involve Evil as a matter of logical necessity in the process of emanation, and of his attempt ultimately to derive its substance from the substance of the One. His failure would seem to lie in an imperfect understanding of the implications of the analogy, upon which he relies. As the odour

goes forth from the scented substance, as heat is spread abroad from the fire, as light shines out from the sun, even so the universe emanates from God. And as the odour by reason of its very exhalation and of its own nature, as it were, weakens and dies into scentless air, as the heat and the light seem, incidentally to the conditions of an existence separate from their source and of their own selves, to dissipate, and grow cool, and fade, degree by degree and shade by shade, till at length they reach utter cold and darkness;—so, Plotinus thinks, the outpoured world, just because of its emanation, must gradually dwindle in its measure of Being until it has shrunk to nothingness.

But now, as a matter of fact, neither odour nor heat nor light fades by any inner necessity of its nature, but each is dissipated by the agency of principles other than itself. The perfume loses its strength as it proceeds from its source, because the molecules that compose its exhalation are separated by the air. Heat cools, and light darkens because they are diffused throughout space. The explanation of their diminution is to be found neither in their own natures as such, nor yet in the nature of the centre from which they proceed, but must be referred to another factor. Given but a single force overflowing from its source with nothing to oppose or dissipate it, and that force would forever express the full strength of its origin without any diminution. Given, we might say to Plotinus,

your One, and nothing but the One in the beginning, with no opposing principle of dissipation, the world poured out from it would in every part and at all distances express the full measure of its excellence, just as were light and heat not of necessity dissipated by space, the outermost ramparts of the world would flame with the same intensity as the core of the central sun.

In the attempt to derive Matter substantially from the One, the same failure occurs. Matter is called τὸ ἔσχατον, the last, the limit, beyond which emanation cannot proceed. But darkness is not a minimum, but an absence of light. Pure Matter is not a minimum, but an absence of Being. Matter exists only where and in what degree Being has ceased to be. When Being has altogether disappeared we have pure Matter. But the last degree of Being does not radiate Not-being from itself in the same way that it was radiated from the degree above. It does not *produce* Not-being by its death; just as light does not produce darkness by going out. The diminution of light and the production of darkness have a common cause. But that cause lies not in the nature of light. In the same way the negation of Being and the increase of Not-being have a common principle. But that principle does not lie in Being, but in something that hinders and thwarts its realization of its proper nature.

The analogy, then, will not hold. There is nothing in the nature of light or in the emanation of light

which of itself necessitates or gives rise to darkness. Darkness requires a separate and opposed principle of its own. Plotinus is involved in dualism by the implications of his own figure. Monistic analogies, indeed, were not lacking to him. He might have thought of the emanation of the world as a stream flowing in an impervious and frictionless channel, undiminished by evaporation, falling, if you like, from level to level. But such an analogy would give no support to the contention that there is a diminution in degree as well as a change in kind of perfection. For at every point the stream would be found to have all the volume and velocity of its source. It would flow down its channel even as we might fancy the whole sun projecting itself down a column of ether of its own diameter laid out through the absolute void, undiminished in temperature and brilliance to the end.

We have played long enough with analogies. Still, our indulgence in them may have served to awaken one significant suspicion in our minds. We may well wonder whether any that Plotinus might have chosen to illustrate his monism would not, upon analysis, have been found altogether to preclude his doctrine of degrees either of perfection or imperfection, and the possibility of Evil; and whether any which had sought to figure a derivation of Evil from the Good, of imperfection from the perfect, would not, in spite of monistic appearances, have involved an inevitable dualism.

With the collapse of the great Plotinian analogy, all the effort to deduce the imperfect from the perfect which it seemed to encourage and validate comes equally to naught. For, whatever we may think of the possibility of such a deduction in general (and my own scepticism with respect to it I have already abundantly expressed), Plotinus's theory of emanation fails to accomplish it. It is no more in the nature of Being to dwindle unaided into Not-being than it is in the nature of heat to become cold. Perfection can no more account for its own diminution, than light can contain within itself the reason why it fades. An emanation from the perfect would, if unimpeded, preserve all the excellence of its origin. Any world it might create would, it is true, be indistinguishable from God in value, but at the same time an appeal to the principle of the identity of indiscernibles would be beside the point. It might still be a different fact from God. Or rather it and God would have become parts of an infinitely rich and varied world between whose different elements no comparisons of better or worse could be made,—of a divine world in other words, in which there was nothing that was not godlike, and all things were gods, and God was all in all.

But the original perfection of such an experience could not account for its vitiation by differences of values between its parts. Nor could we find any reason for any diminution in the excellence of the world by calling it an overflow from the perfect,

and therefore of less content than its source. There would, perhaps, be less of it, but what there was would be no less good. It might not contain as many kinds of perfection, but each kind would be absolutely perfect and self-sufficient. The water which runs over from the fountain is no less clear and pure and good to drink than that which stirs in its depths. So far, then, as Plotinus has in mind such an argument, he is confusing quantitative with qualitative measure. There is no necessary connection between the mere size of a world and its goodness.

We conclude that the perfect cannot be conceived as producing what is less perfect *qua* less perfect. In it no *raison d'être* can be found for anything other than itself. If there be a diminution of the Good such as Plotinus imagines, the fact that as the Good goes forth it grows less good, can be explained only by the friction of another principle for the existence of which the Good cannot account. In fine, Plotinus does not achieve his purpose. The δεύτερος λόγος of the Neo-Pythagoreans is not harmonized with and reduced to their ἀνωτάτω λόγος. Plotinus is a dualist in spite of himself.

Our study of the Plotinian theodicy is now complete. We have only, in bringing the discussion to an end, to cast a last rapid glance back over the ground we have traversed, and to try to see as a whole the nature and significance of our subject.

Plotinus succeeds to two traditions or points of view (the naturalistic and mystic), which were left him, with years of accumulation and development between, by Plato. This is the key to a proper understanding of his treatment of his problem. On the one hand he inherits the Hellenic belief and joy in natural goods, a belief ever found in practice if not in theory, partially expressed in the ethics of Plato and Aristotle, and over-reaching itself and complicated with an ascetic morality in the metaphysical system of the Stoics. On the other hand, all the fruits of a mysticism and dualism latent in Plato and Aristotle, strong in certain cults of the popular religion, and ripened in the later Neo-Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic movement—the hatred of matter, the scorn of the world, the contempt of the body, the despair of reason, the yearning after the infinite and ineffable where alone the soul can find peace and its true beloved—these were all his.

Thus we find him on the one hand combating the Epicurean mechanicalism and the Gnostic pessimism with a doctrine of the essential goodness of the world. To defend and prove his point he brings the whole Stoic panoply into play. The world is a perfect whole. To its perfection all things contribute after their kinds. Taken separately its parts may seem imperfect, but seen in relation to the totality of the system in which they are factors they are seen to have their place and justification.

What we call Evil is like the shadow in the picture, the villain in the play. Its presence enhances the perfection of the whole, acting as a foil and stimulus and occasion for the display of virtue, and as a contrast to the Good. And along with this utilization of the Stoic argument goes the almost Pyrrhonic contention that distinctions of better and worse are but superficial and relative, and that one thing has as much right to exist as another.

At the same time we find Plotinus referring Evil to Matter, which, described in terms of Plato and Aristotle, as "not-being," "the other," "potentiality," etc., he sets in dualistic fashion over against the Good. Between these opposites he interpolates, as do Philo and Numenius, a hierarchy of stages—Mind and Soul and the Universe. God he conceives mystically as beyond all possible definitions and determinations, super-essential, super-existential, super-rational, super-everything. And the sovereign good of moral action he finds to consist in an ecstatic union of the soul with the godhead, to be attained only by a renunciation of the body and the world, and a meditative concentration of the soul within herself.

An attempt to reconcile these two tendencies is made in the metaphysical theory of emanation. The universe overflows from the godhead as light shines forth from the sun, and lapses from one degree of fulness of being to another till it is spent in nothingness. In the light of such a theory of

creation, Plotinus thinks that we may be both naturalistic and mystic, monist and dualist, at the same time. We may hold that everything in the universe is perfect after its kind, and yet that one kind is not so perfect as another. Similarly while we grant its due measure of excellence to the universe, and are to rejoice in its beauty and perfection, there are glories far brighter and forms of experience far more perfect than the glory and experience of this world. To them we should seek to rise, finding in natural goods and beauties, in true Platonic fashion, merely the adumbrations of a transcendent perfection. Finally, as we have so lately seen that it needs no review, Plotinus finds in his theory of emanation a device for bringing his opposite principles together and for overcoming the dualism of Spirit and Matter. He shows how Matter may be involved in and created by the procession of Spirit from its source, and so ultimately related to the One without thereby involving the process in imperfection or making God the cause of Evil.

The achievement of either of these ends we were forced to deny. By no device can the distinction between kinds of perfection be made interchangeable with degrees thereof; nor can any process of emanation by any logical necessity be made to involve a progressive diminution of its own content or to imply a final cessation of itself in not-being. The result is that everywhere throughout the Plotinian system the unhealed breach between the

two tendencies of thought confronts us. One seems always to be dealing, not with a single, but with two separate philosophies, between which Plotinus is continually vacillating with baffling and tireless celerity. Or, to change the figure, Plotinus's philosophy is like a flask of oil and water in which the two liquids, though they cannot by nature mix, have been shaken into complete inter-penetration. His method consists in merely continuing to shake them in such wise that there is never a drop of oil without a corresponding drop of water to wash it off, or a drop of water without a drop of oil to keep one dry from it.

Two fundamental fallacies arise from this double point of view. First, there is the confusion of degrees of imperfection with kinds of perfection; the contention, that is, that perfection can be intrinsically more or less perfect. The consequences of this fallacy we have had occasion to note again and again. There is scarcely a self-contradiction in the theodicy which is not referable to it. Secondly, there is the fatal analogy of the substance and its perfume, the fire and its heat, the sun and its light, upon which Plotinus relies to illustrate the relation of God to the world. As we have seen, it will not hold. To appeal to any of these similes in order to explain how the world proceeds from God, is to imply precisely that which they were designed to overcome, namely, a thoroughly dualistic theory of creation.

Our final judgment, then, upon the Plotinian theodicy must be that, ingenious and profound as is its argument, and eloquent and splendid as is its pleading, it has failed to establish its case. It has neither removed the "doubts concerning universal providence" of the opening lines of the first chapter, nor refuted the theory of an evil Creator. It has shown rather that if Providence be regarded as universal, the Creator must of logical necessity be conceived as evil. For, once more, the divine will, if unopposed, and the divine power, if unlimited, are alone responsible for the evil in the world. If things have but a single source, in that source, and nowhere else, lies the explanation of their imperfection. By rejecting dualism and seeking to derive Matter from the One, Plotinus defeats his own purpose, and refers Evil to the One as its ground and cause. Like so many saints and sages who have dealt with our problem, he comes out by the same door wherein he went. His theodicy ends in the dilemma from which it started. Either God is not justified or Evil is not explained.

INDEX OF AUTHORS, ETC., CITED

Academy, the New, 34, 35
Aenesidemus, 35
Aeschylus, 25 ; *Agamemnon cit.*, 172
Albinus, 125
Anaxagoras, 26, 275
Anaximander, 275
Aristotle, 25, 27, 28 ff., 39, 46, 47, 51 ff., 66, 70, 71, 79, 83, 89, 98 ff., 141, 226, 228, 237, 240 ff., 251, 254 ff., 272 ff., 275, 282 ff., 329 ; *Metaphysics cit.*, 70, 141, 237, 241, 275, 286 ; *Physics cit.*, 243
Athanasian Creed, the, *cit.*, 72
Atomists, the, 192, 226, 275

Bouillet, *Les Ennéades de Plotin cit.*, 105 *note*

Cantor, 276
Carneades, 34
Celsus, 42
Chalcidius, *In Timaeum Platonis cit.*, 250
Christianity, 19, 20, 133, 183
Chrysippus, 157 ; *cit.*, 207

Dante, *Paradiso cit.*, 10, 95
Democritus, 33
Deussen, *Elements of Metaphysics cit.*, 64
Diogenes Laertius, 38, 245, 298

Eleatics, the, 226
Empedocles, 26, 275, 320
Empiricists, the, 35
Epicureans, the, 22, 29, 33, 43, 122, 130, 284, 329
Eudemus, 249
Eudorus, 38, 298
Euripides, 27
Eusebius, 310 *note*

Francis, St., 126

Gnostics, the, 103 ff., 131, 308, 329

Hegel, 151
Heracleitus, 192, 250, 320, 322
Hermes Trismegistus, 42, 125
Hesiod, 186
Homer, 25, 186, 250

Kant, 197 ff., 202 ff.

Leibnitz, 2, 139
Leucippus, 275

Marcus Aurelius, 107, 157
Maximus, 125, 141
Milton, *Paradise Lost cit.*, 44

Neo-Platonists, the, 26, 43, 125, 222, 226, 285, 329
Neo-Pythagoreans, the, 36 ff., 125, 226, 298, 328, 329,
Nicene Creed, the, *cit.*, 72
Numenius, 41, 125, 249, 250, 310 *note*, 330

Orphics, the, 126

Philo, 38, 40, 41, 44, 64, 65, 66, 126, 250 ff., 257, 330 ; *De creat. princip.* ; *De prof.* ; *De*

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